

## Mech Touch 6591

Chapter 6591 The Nature of Demons

Compared to her difficult talk with Master Willix, Veronica had a much easier time convincing Helena to play along.

When the Cyborg Cat left the design lab and navigated the halls of the Throne of

Light, she eventually visited a meditation room that was located on a different section of the flagship.

Helena was not a corporeal life form, but that did not mean she was unable to maintain a trace of herself in the material realm.

When Veronica entered his eldest sister's private meditation room and other chambers, she flew closer to a certain gray mechanical cat.

Veronica originally chose to fulfill Helena's desire to interact with physical reality with the Helcat avatar instead of a humanoid doll in order to stay in the good graces of the Big Two.

She no longer cared that much about the taboo against imparting human identities to inhuman entities anymore.

While Veronica had offered multiple times to replace the Helcat with a proper human-like vessel that could host her manifested spirit, Helena actually changed her opinions about her choice of physical avatars.

Helena had fallen in love with the Helcat!

Adopting a mechanical cat form made her smaller and more adorable than her usual scary death goddess guise.

The Daughter of Death could relax and split a portion of her vast mentality into the Helcat so that she could pretend to be a pet and act cute in the presence of other people.

Since the years that Veronica initially crafted the Helcat, she had taken the mechanical construct to her workshop and upgraded it several times.

Veronica made use of better materials, better craftsmanship and increased time investment to turn the Helcat into a work of art..

By this time, the Helcat had turned into a masterwork cat avatar. It still boasted a relatively unobtrusive gray color theme, but Veronica cleverly alternated the tints of her exterior to add more contrast and sophistication to her visual appearance.

The Helcat also gained additional decorative flourishes in the form of carved runes of Helena's choosing as well as embedded obsidian-like jewels.

Veronica had come to take pride in this example of craftsmanship.

Even if Helena abruptly came into existence and became a part of the family, Veronica had come to accent this sudden family relationship

Veronica did not have many people that she could trust on an unconditional basis. She was never able to trust her mother all that much for obvious reasons. That was an unfortunate reality.

The Cyborg Cat was instead able to channel her need for family affection in the Daughter of Death, who may have been raised by the Oblivion Empress, but inherited none of her mother's acerbic personality.

"Mraw! It has been a while since you last paid a visit to me, little sister!"

The gray cat jumped out the army of interactive animal plushies and dove straight. towards the biomechanical cat!

Veronica promptly got pounced by her own masterwork!

"Myaow! Stop that, Helena! I am not a little kitten!"

"Mraw mraw mraw! I will never stop because this is what all big sisters do to their younger siblings!"

After the two metallic cats wrestled and bit each other for a minute, Helena finally had her fill and withdrew her cat avatar.

The two 'sisters' eventually settled down on a pair of comfortable couches.

Veronica idly looked around the meditation chamber and found that it differed

substantially from their mother's mediation room.

Where their mother's private sanctum gave off a refined and peaceful atmosphere, the room claimed by Helena was brash and loud!

The initially calming interior gained a lot of personality when Helena plastered the walls with projected posters of bands and promotional artwork of popular dramas.

The army of animal plushies that Helena had been playing with earlier made it seem as if it was owned by a preteen girl, which actually happened to be true.

All in all, Helena had more in common with a little girl like Andraste than a grown adult female like Gloriana.

Veronica loved Helena all the more because of that. The two could comfortably talk with each other without any regard for schemes, duplicity and ulterior motives. While Veronica knew quite well that she was setting herself up for a painful betrayal if she kept talking earnestly with her supposed eldest sister, she disregarded this vulnerability and continued to place her trust in Helena.

Perhaps Veronica simply did not want this fantasy to end.

Once the two cats settled down, Veronica quickly explained her newfound demand for souls and why she needed Helena's cooperation.

The Daughter of Death calmly listened and fell into thought.

to know a thing or two about demons. That is part of the lore that mother has taught to me. She told me that demons are souls that have lost so much hope and suffered so much pain that they have become tainted by darkness. Once the taint has completely filled their essence with hatred and suffering, their transformation into demons is complete. From that point onwards, these beings have become damned by existence and have developed an irreconcilable hostility towards the living beings they used to be a part of. It is not an exaggeration to say that they are not exactly dead, but they are still intrinsically opposed to life."

Interesting!

Veronica's visit already paid off. Gathering information about the true nature of demons was vital information. The more Helena shared, the better!

"That is helpful to know, but much of it sounds a bit vague. Can you tell me anything specific about demons? For example, where do they hang out, how often do they appear in reality, and is it possible for us to hunt them down?"

Helena chuckled. "Our mother did not get that far in her explanation. She might not even know the answer. I can tell you that as my influence in the Red Ocean and the Milky Way grows, I may have come across a number of suspicious traces that may have denoted the passage of demons. I do not think I have encountered one directly, sadly. As for actively hunting them down, that is futile if we do not know enough about them to track their locations."

"Ah. I guess I was hoping for too much."

"Knowledge solves everything, little sister. Be patient. We shall be able to unearth the hidden secrets of demons in time."

"What else do you know about them, Helena?"

"Our mother has taught me that certain demons are far more threatening than others. The weakest demons are usually spawned from fairly strong mortals with relatively excellent abilities. They cannot emerge from weaklings because the metamorphosis into demonhood is demanding and painful. The souls that cannot endure this torment will shatter and disappear."

"I see."

That was an important piece of information to know. If Ves wanted to spawn his own demon, then he had to make sure to capture the soul of a 'fairly strong' mortal first, which probably translated into an individual in the first major cultivation rank. This may include expert pilots, Journeyman Mech Designers, Senior Mech Designers, swordmasters and qi cultivating foundation builders.

"Is it possible to convert a stronger soul into a stronger demon?" Helena frowned. "Possibly, but... stronger souls are generally much more tempered

and can endure far greater torment than normal. They are far too unlikely to degenerate into demons. I think that it is much more likely for stronger demons to emerge from the ranks of weaker demons."

"How do weaker demons become stronger?"

"Oh that is simple. Demons are malevolent and cruel by nature, so satisfying their destructive urges will feed their strength. It is not that easy for them to promote themselves, however. They must kill a large number of people in order to trigger a second transformation. They may also have to satisfy other conditions that I am not aware of. Whatever the case, once they have succeeded, they gain much more power but also regain a part of their lucidity. They will become more capable of rational thought, but that will only make them more dangerous."

"All of this sounds rather scary, Helena. How can ordinary folk defend against the predation of these deadly demons?"

"Oh, do not worry too much. Demons cannot sustain themselves in the material realm or close to it. They sustain damage with every second they reside here. One of the reasons for this is because the heavens are unfriendly towards them. If the demons insist on staying, they will eventually be wiped out before they can kill a large number of people. At most, a handful of unlucky individuals will collapse and suffer from a

permanent coma before the demon is excised from reality"

That was also important information!

The heavenly authorities were actually doing good this time by doing their part to

keep their galaxies clean of any demon infestations.

Was this why Ketis and the Heavensword were negatively predisposed towards

Demoncasting?

"Okay, I understand. These demons must be residing in other dimensions or 'realms', is

that correct?"

"Presumably that is the case, but do not ask me where they can be found. I am willing to help you search for them, but my capabilities are limited in this area."

Veronica shrugged.

"It's okay. I think I will settle for getting my demons, particularly stronger ones, by

starting out with Minor Demons and nurturing them into stronger ones. With so many souls in the Milky Way to harvest from, I do not think it will be challenging for me to pluck out an ample number of stronger ones. The question is how exactly I can transform them into demons on an industrial scale."

"We can work on this problem together." Helena offered. "I can imagine that the basic process to artificially transform a demon into a soul is to inflict an excessive amount. of raw pain onto them. Relying on brute force is not my preferred solution, but it is the only means we can rely upon to produce consistent results on a larger scale. The greatest challenge is to make souls suffer to the point where they do not want to live anymore, but not inflict too much actual harm. Abusing souls too much will cause them to shatter outright, you see."

Veronica grinned and lifted up a silvery paw. She waved it forward, causing a small

Soul Whip to lash out and strike the air.

"Will this do?"

"That... that is a remarkably pure technique!"

The Helcat already tried to imitate it. Her imitation ability should not be underestimated. She was not only an energy-based life form, but also received a lot of

focused teachings from her mother,

Barely half a minute had passed before Helena produced her own intangible whip!

Unfortunately, her first attempt not only lacked the length and cohesion as a whip, but did not even promise that much pain when hitting a soul.

"Would you like me to pass on my technique to you?" Veronica offered.

"No, I can figure this out myself!" The eldest sister insisted! "It shouldn't be too difficult

to replicate a technique this simple! In fact, it is criminal that no effort has been made to 'encrypt' it. That allows anyone including myself to decipher how it works and understand its weaknesses. You should seriously think about obfuscating the details of your Soul Whip by altering it with your unique powers and specialized knowledge. The more your technique deviates from this crystal clear technique, the harder it will be for others to imitate or counter your whip."

Veronica never thought about that. This was one of the many valuable life lessons that his mother declined to teach to her original child.

"Thank you for your advice. I will do so whenever I have time. For now, I think the

basic version of a Soul Whip is sufficient. Do you have a 'fairly strong' soul in your

possession that I can practice this on? I want to see how difficult it is to produce a demon."

"Give me a moment."

Chapter 6592 The Mysterious Prison

When Veronica and Helena decided to create their first demon through artificial means, they first needed to acquire a soul.

This was not as simple as it sounded.

"I do not have the habit of storing souls." The gray-coated Helcat spoke to the other cat. "I mean, why would I? My responsibility as the Daughter of Death is to ensure those who believe in me will get taken care of after their demise. This entails many duties such as making sure that souls do not get mixed up and that other predators do not take them away for their own nefarious purposes."

"Does that include me?" Veronica plainly asked.

The Helcat folded her paws in front of her feline chest. "Even you, little sister. This is one area that I cannot afford to compromise on. I am a death goddess of the Hex Federation, the Oblivion Empire and any other humans who worship the Superior Mother or myself. Its citizens worship me for the most part, which means that I have the duty to be attentive to their prayers and safeguard their souls, mostly against the threats that they cannot defend themselves against. When they die, I have a duty to ensure they pass on as they are meant to. A goddess that does not even bother to fulfill her basic duties to her worshipers is a parasite that has more in common with demons. I refuse to degenerate to that level."

In other words, a god was just another form of service provider, just a really fancy and sacred one.

Veronica understood the importance of responsibility, duty and reciprocity, so she did not press her demand any further. Doing so would touch upon Helena's principles and lead to a deterioration in their relationship.

"It's okay, Helena. Forget what I just asked. Your worshipers account for a very insignificant proportion of the human population in the Red Ocean and the Milky Way anyway. There are way more humans and aliens out there that you do not have an obligation to protect. Anyway, let's get back to business. Since you don't have any souls in storage, can you harvest one at this time?"

"That is easy enough. Plenty of my worshipers are involved in battles and scuffles in both galaxies. It is much easier to harvest a large amount of souls in the Red Ocean at the moment due to the ongoing Red Tide Offensive, but it is not that simple to transfer a soul from one galaxy to another. Even if I am able to maintain a presence in both, I cannot completely disregard the enormous distance between the Red Ocean and the Milky Way"



"Is it still possible?"

The cute Helcat nodded. "I can do it for anything immaterial, but don't expect me to do the same for material objects. Even our mother has to make use of the Oblivion Gates to transfer goods across intergalactic distances. For a typical soul, I can only transfer it from the Red Ocean to the Milky Way if I invest a large amount of qi to cross the enormous divide and keep it protected against the dangers of the void. It is highly cost-ineffective to do this for a single soul that isn't valuable, so it is better if I save it up for an insubstantial good of actual value such as a demon."

"I see. That is good to know."

In short, Helena did not want to bother carting around a large amount of low-value souls through the intergalactic void.

Veronica should only tap her eldest sister's transportation capabilities when she had prepared a batch of finished trade goods.

"Can you pluck a soul in and around the Oblivion Empire, then?"

"I can." Helena's mechanical cat avatar started to grin. "In fact, the circumstances of the Nyxian Gap are actually a lot more special than you think. This entire anomalous space has actually been converted into a mysterious prison of sorts by an ancient True God of sorts. There are many souls floating around that have been chained for more years than you can imagine. This prison has not only captured a huge amount of souls from alien beings who have died ages ago, but also captures the souls of humans who have died much more recently in or around the anomalous space."

That was right! How could Veronica forget about that! The Nyxian Gap was one of the few places where the boundary between the material realm and the imaginary realm had weakened, thereby allowing cultivators to channel their power more easily.

Also, the strange soul prison also seemed to have been created for the purpose of forming 'spiritual energy generators!

Since the heavens of the Milky Way Galaxy had collapsed, many ancient and powerful cultivators had lost access to the power of heaven, causing them to weaken and even starve to death as they were unable to sustain their energy hungry existences.

A lot of powerful True Gods apparently resorted to extreme and desperate solutions to survive the new age of deprivation and ruination.

Whoever created the Nyxian Gap had come up with a genius idea. One of the known sources of spiritual energy was the spiritualities of sentient beings.

If that was the case, why not rip the souls of as many of these beings as possible, put them in a form of permanent captivity, and squeeze them at regular intervals to produce spiritual energy?

Although it sounded incredibly crazy, it actually worked!

If Veronica concentrated her spiritual senses just enough, she could vaguely perceive a giant intangible vortex of shackled souls that encompassed the entirety of the

Nyxian Gap,

These imprisoned entities had been imprisoned for so long that they lost much of

their identity and distinctive traits. Even so, they had not completely degenerated into demons, nor received strong enough blows to shatter apart.

The mysterious prison was not that merciful to these unfortunate captives. Their only job was to produce spiritual energy through stimulating their mental activity, and it was best if they lasted as long as possible!

Sure, the efficiency was awfully low, and it took a lot of energy just to keep all of the 'inmates' under control and alive over the long term, but the mysterious prison turned the Nyxian Gap into one of the few pockets of space where spiritual energy became available.

Unfortunately, much of the spiritual energy came in the form of negative attributes. This not only warped the fabric of space inside the anomalous region, but also had to undergo a process of filtering and conversion in order to make the resulting energy safe to use by general cultivators.

That was why the abnormal energy environment Nyxian Gap was ultimately inferior to the medium-energy environment of the Red Ocean.

"Do you have control over the trapped souls of this mysterious prison?"

"As a matter of fact, I do. Our mother successfully took over the Nyxian Gap, which means she holds the highest authority as its latest warden. That is the source of her current title. Why else do you think she is called the Oblivion Empress? In any case, she appointed me as the vice warden. This gives me broad authority over the prison. I am mostly responsible for managing the day-to-day affairs. This can entail pruning the souls that have been repeatedly exhausted to the point their upkeep is higher than their revenue. I am also expected to keep out any souls that count among our subjects or worshipers. One day, I will inherit the Nyxian Gap entirely"

Veronica looked impressed. Controlling the Nyxian Gap turned out to be a huge deal. "Earlier, you told me that you don't store any souls. Now I find out that you are already running a gigantic soul prison."

"None of it is mine." Helena retorted. "It all belongs to our mother. She is the only god who can decide the fate of these souls. Recently, she sacrificed a large proportion of them in order to fuel the initial activation of the Black Oblivion Gate. She has been working on upgrading the gate with the imported hyper materials so that it will only require a fraction of the previous amount of qi to activate it again. However, we have actually fallen to our weakest point in years. Our mysterious prison is much emptier than before. This not only means we have less souls to sacrifice to generate an immediate burst of qi, but our 'periodic income' has also dropped to a massive extent."

Veronica suddenly started to connect a few dots!

It was no wonder why the Oblivion Empress insisted that Veronica rush the Rule Breaker Project to completion!

Her mother imposed a tight deadline for a good reason!

The goal was to generate as much conflict as possible in the short term, thereby

causing a lot of people in the star sectors surrounding the Nyxian Gap to die!

Once they perished, the mysterious prison would catch their souls and reel them in, thereby replacing the spent captives that previously ensured the prosperity of the anomalous region!

The Oblivion Empress even planned to expand the Nyxian Gap during the upcoming period of turmoil.

The larger and more populated the mysterious prison, the larger the energy reserves at Cynthia's disposal!

Right now was a bad time for Helena to embezzle a soul here and there. The Nyxian Gap had reached a depleted state, so the Oblivion Empress was especially sensitive to any theft or breakout attempts.

Fortunately, Cynthia did not care too much about the souls of deceased humans that have yet to enter the mysterious prison.

It was easy enough for Helena to pay attention to the routine skirmishes that look

place in the Komodo Star Sector, the Majestic Teal Star Sector and especially the Vicious Mountain Star Sector.

Human infighting remained as strong as ever in a galaxy that was still stuck in the Age of Mechs.

Plenty of outfits fought against each other in order to topple their competitors, steal

the foundation of their rivals, take revenge for grievances made in the past or simply engage in a little opportunistic piracy and rob a nearby shipment of goods.

It all made Veronica feel nostalgic about the past. Red humanity had long moved past these petty and largely pointless conflicts.

Even if no big wars were taking place at the moment, the minor scuffles alone were enough for Helena to pluck a good amount of souls at any time.

She just had to be observant and pick up the right ones.

"Here." The Helcat eventually said as she manifested the soul of a mech designer who

had died just a few minutes earlier. "Since you demanded a soul for the purpose of transforming into a demon, I made sure to select one that deserves this treatment." Veronica grew disappointed when she saw that the soul belonged to a Journeyman Mech Designer. That was a cultivator who barely entered the first major cultivation

rank.

She would have preferred to obtain a strong and aggressive soul such as an expert pilot, but they died at much lower rates, especially during times of relative peace and stability.

"What did he do for you to think he deserves what is coming for him?" The Cyborg Cat

asked.

"In order to become the top-scoring student in his class when he attended a mech

design university, he used the power of his family to assassinate one classmate and ruin the reputation of another. His plots succeeded. With the honor of becoming the top ranking student, he received much better employment offers than he should have earned. He subsequently thrived and made fast progress, earning the appreciation of his superiors in the process. If not for the fact that his misdeeds ultimately came back at him by falling for an ambush prepared by the relatives of his defeated rivals, he wouldn't have died so soon. He grew too careless and never expected mercenaries to attack his passenger vessel when he was transiting to another star system." What a dirty deed. Mech designers possessed a meek image, but they could be just as ruthless as anyone if they had enough ambition and the willingness to resort to

unsavory measures. "This soul will do, then."

Chapter 6593 The Dark Descent

Transforming the soul of a Journeyman Mech Designer into a 'demon' was not that simple.

As a spirit derived from a human who had barely passed the threshold of the first major cultivation rank, it was easy to go overboard and break it outright.

Souls were normally fragile existences. Without any of the vitality and protection that came from occupying a living body, they became defenseless and could wither away at any moment.

Perhaps that was why Demoncasting and Demonforging centered around the use of demons as opposed to uncorrupted souls.

The former had already undergone a process of demonization, which caused them to undergo a bizarre transformation that radically strengthened their substance.

Even if the mutations caused the souls to become ugly, corrupted and irrational, they also gained a lot of strength and endurance, allowing them to withstand punishment that they previously could not endure!

This sounded perfect for Demoncasting and Demonforging as both these production processes subjected their intangible ingredients to a lot of abuse before they adopted their new forms.

Now that Veronica understood a little more why she needed to obtain a demon, she grew more eager to produce one herself.

After all, being able to convert one from a random soul plucked by Helena would save Veronica 5 Ascension Points!

After Helena fixed the soul of a Journeyman Mech Designer in place, Veronica repeatedly began to strike it with her Soul Whip.

The soul started to utter a soundless scream of agony. Soul Whips were effective against cruel and tougher demons, so an uncorrupted soul without the protection of a corporeal body was much more susceptible to pain produced by this technique!

Veronica felt more and more lucky that she managed to obtain such a fitting

technique by stacking 10 golden lottery tickets at once. The Soul Whip offered a lot more utility than he initially expected.

With every lash of the intangible whip, the soul of the deceased mech designer experienced further torment, but never sustained all that much damage to its integrity.

The Soul Whip concentrated almost all of its damage potential to stimulating the intangible pain receptors of its targets. This was why the soul of the Journeyman Mech Designer deteriorated a lot slower than it should.

Both Veronica and Helena knew that if they struck the soul with a more conventional spiritual attack, it would have lasted for a couple of blows at most before bursting apart like a balloon!

Whip after whip struck the soul as if it had entered hell and needed to undergo unending torment.

However, after Veronica whipped the soul 20 times in a row, her feline expression gradually started to frown.

"There isn't as much progress as I expect."

"That is no surprise. Turning a soul into a demon by relying on the simple application of pain is a stupid method." Helena said. "The more refined way of turning a soul into a demon is to combine it with psychological attacks. You need to completely collapse all forms of strength and sustenance. When the soul has completely and utterly lost all hope of salvation or relief, that is when it has finally reached the tipping point."

That was an informative explanation. The Cyborg Cat already devised a few possible solutions on how she could increase the efficiency of this tedious and monotonous process.

However, Veronica refrained from modifying the application of the Soul Whip technique. She also declined to employ her Devil Tongue to add psychological pressure to the soul.

One of her purposes this time was to create a baseline.

Time passed by. The soul, despite belonging to a mere Journeyman Mech Designer, still held out for a surprisingly lengthy amount of time. Veronica no longer bothered to count how many times she whipped the soul.

She figured out that there was some sort of diminishing returns in effect. Whipping the soul once generated a huge amount of pain, but doing it on repeat would

eventually cause it to get acclimated to his new condition.

Part of that was because Veronica made no effort to vary the Soul Whip.

Another part of it was because Veronica's proficiency in the technique was mediocre.

A third factor was her relatively low cultivation rank.

A Soul Whip generated by his mother would definitely be at least a hundred times more painful!

In fact, if a True God channeled a Soul Whip at full power, it may outright blast apart the unprotected soul of a Journeyman Mech Designer due to the enormous disparity

in strength!

Veronica was still far from reaching that level. The lackluster size and the dim manifestation of her whips reflected their lack of strength.

"This is getting tedious"

Even though Veronica and Helena both grew bored when nothing seemed to change

after a while, both of them were patient enough to persist.

Helena constantly split her attention, so she was never idle or bored.

Veronica could assist Ves in design work by acting as an additional urce

thought.



After two hours had passed, the Cyborg Cat finally started to perk up again when she finally noticed a difference.

"We are getting close." The Helcat said as the avatar grew a lot more active again. "I thought the soul would last for at least a couple more hours, but this mech designer is ultimately too... weak-willed."

"What do you expect from a civilian and a mech designer? Not everyone from my profession is similar to me or Ketis."

Veronica tried her best to maintain the current frequency of lashings. She did not seek

to introduce any variables that could interrupt the process that was coming.

Soon enough, the soul of the tortured mech designer finally underwent a transformation.

With every Soul Whip that struck the victim, the soul began to darken at a rapid speed.

The faint amount of negative energy available in the Nyxian Gap also played a facilitating role.

The tainted soul began to suck up as much negative energy that it could draw from the surrounding environment.

This accelerated the process of demonization and also caused the soul of the mech designer to become affected by foreign pollution.

Mutations began to occur at a rapid rate. At first, the soul looked like an identical version of the Journeyman back when he was alive. He even wore his most common outfit which was a casual suit covered by a plain white lab coat.

Now, his clothes became filthy and frayed. His lab coat maintained its pale coloration, but it started to acquire scuffs and holes as if it had been subjected to years-long

abuse.

The body of the mech designer mutated as well. His skin grew darker but also paler until it reached a dark blue tint.

The proportions of the mech designer's body also began to fluctuate. His back started hunching over while his arms grew unnaturally long. His head began to warp and lengthen while his teeth started to mutate into fangs!

When the blue-skinned monster spawned a long and slender tail for no apparent

reason the demonization process had finally reached its end!

"So this is a real Minor Demon."

Veronica saw that this freshly transformed demon had much in common with the

fiends produced by the Geist System of the Phobos. In fact, she even speculated that

they possessed the same root.

That was a naive thought. Veronica finally understood what set them apart.

Demons were beings of pure malevolence and negativity, but they did not start out that way.

Every demon once lived as a normal living being. They started off as positive life

forms, but experienced so much suffering and despair that they degenerated into

negative life forms.

They underwent an evolution in a very dark direction, but they still retained a number of advantages of their previous life phase.

Fiends on the other hand were completely artificial beings that were periodically spawned by Ves and later Helena out of raw spiritual energy.

They started off as pure negative life forms from the onset, and lacked the growth and accumulation of a regular life form.

Their foundations were therefore vastly inferior, and their growth potential was likely stunted as a result.

It was like the difference between cloned adult humans and people who grew up naturally from birth.

The latter may look indistinguishable from a normal person, but their intelligence and spirit were crippled to the point where they could not even function properly! While the situation with fiends and demons were a little bit different from that analogy, it was enough to help Veronica understand the situation a bit better. The Cyborg Cat could create a fiend easily enough by gathering enough negative energy and giving it the spark of life.

She could not produce a demon from scratch just as she was not able to create a human soul from the beginning because they fell outside of the scope of his abilities.

That was okay.

Now that Veronica had witnessed the transformation of a human soul into a Minor Demon, she became confident she could produce more of the latter!

She just needed to gather a large batch of decently strong souls before finding a way

to whip them on an industrial scale in order to produce one Minor Demon after

another.

As the blue-skinned demon spawned from the soul of the Journeyman Mech Designer regained its senses, it immediately attempted to break out of its confinement and

attack Veronica and Helena, heedless of the substantial gap in power! Veronica snorted. "Damn, Minor Demons are truly dimwits. This guy has no chance of

beating you, but look at him trying to claw out your face.

"Demons are supposed to become smarter when they evolve. Who they used to be

before they transformed also affects their intelligence and rationality," The fact that this blue demon sought to kill the Daughter of Death herself was

probably not the most erudite of mech designers among his peers. "So what do you want to do with it, or him now, little sister?"

"Let us examine him. I need to test his strength, his reaction to my Soul Whip and

more."

Veronica began to subject the newly transformed demon to a battery of empirical

tests. She already had a good idea of the strength of the soul before the transformation, so she paid close attention to the range of improvement.

Just as expected, the demon scored much higher in almost every area. There was truly a qualitative difference between uncorrupted souls and demons. The irrational being even gained a few weak powers. All of this made the demon

stronger and scarier than he could have hoped to be when he was still in a weaker

state.

Once Veronica concluded her examination, she began to frown as she thought about her next goal.

"A Minor Demon is not strong enough for my purposes. The works I have in mind for Demoncasting needs to be augmented by a stronger power source. I need a Middle Demon at the very least. Helena, do you know how we can turn this blue fellow into a

bigger and nastier blue fellow?"

"Whipping the demon will not work anymore." The Helcat flopped her tail in uncertainty. "At this point, he has already changed down to his essence. As I mentioned before, the demon needs to fulfill his purpose and feel satisfied while doing

so. Only when he has become successful enough in his destructive purpose will he become qualified to enter a higher stage."

"Ah, you did mention that before. Does that mean we can make him grow quickly

enough if we allow him to torture and kill enough souls?"

Helena shook her feline head. "Again, you are thinking too simple. It will take too long

and far too many souls to satisfy even the weakest of demons. Even if it works, the costs will far outweigh the gains."

Damn. Veronica knew it wouldn't be so simple. The System charged 100 AP just to

summon a single Middle Demon from its ritual circle. This meant that it should be 20

times more troublesome or difficult to obtain a more powerful demon!

"Do you have any suggestions?"

"As a matter of fact, I do. Our mother once taught me another lesson on how to breed

strong dependent creatures."

"How many lessons did mother teach you while denying them to me?!" Veronica

exploded.

"Mother told me never to answer this question."

Chapter 6594 Gu Cultivation

Veronica could accept that her mother only chose to pass on a significant portion of her extensive knowledge to Helena,

That did not mean she was pleased with the difference in treatment.

The Cyborg Cat accepted the logic of Cynthia's explanation. She even agreed with her mother's argument to an extent.

Veronica saw herself as a mech designer first and foremost. Since she was so

committed to this career, it was best if she was able to develop her own insights and solutions, Giving her lots of knowledge related to qi cultivation would distract him and cause him to deviate too much from the mentality of a mech designer.

As a powerful qi cultivator herself, the Oblivion Empress deeply understood the taboos related to contamination and forced inheritance. She took special care to prevent Ves from unintentionally following her path when Veronica was not suitable for her approach.

It made sense for Helena to learn from their mother.

The Daughter of Death was made in her mother's image. Helena was designed by Cynthia to fulfill certain roles, and therefore received all of the teachings she needed to become a True God aspected towards the death attribute.

While Veronica could accept the reasons for the difference in treatment, she couldn't help but feel resentful at how much she was missing out on. A more petulant individual may even accuse Cynthia of playing favorites.

That should not be the case. The Cyborg Cat believed her mother was above such infantile impulses. The Oblivion Empress was a lot more rational than she looked. Many of her decisions were based on cold and heartless calculation.

There was nothing Veronica could do to change her mother's stance, so there was no point in wasting any further thought on this issue.

She focused on what was important. What Veronica needed the most was a way to produce Middle Demons with the resources he was able to attain with the help of Helena.

Only by establishing an independent supply of souls and developing a reliable production method of Middle Demons would Veronica be able to get rid of her dependence on the Demon Summoning Circle.

There was no way that Veronica was willing to pay 100 AP just to summon a single Middle Demon!

She would rather wait for Lucky to produce his yearly quota of gems and convert them into ingredients for Demoncasting.

Meanwhile, Helena explained a theory taught by their mother one day.

"Have you ever heard of the method of raising gu?"

"No. What the is a gu?"

"The word holds many meanings." Helena responded. "There is no word in standard language that can concisely convey the multiple meanings of gu. In this context, raising gu is an ancient process of producing deadly poison, or a creature that contains an unnaturally high concentration of poison. The fundamental method is simple. You collect numerous poisonous insects or other critters, place them in a jar and close the lid before storing it in a dark location. After enough time has passed, you take the jar and open it up. If everything went right, you will end up with a single living creature."

Veronica immediately understood the hidden meanings and possible mechanisms behind this strange and cruel process.

"I see. I think I get what is going on. Tossing several creatures in a small container will practically guarantee a fight to death. Even if they are cautious and timid at the beginning, their hunger and various other deprivations will drive them to desperation. They will begin to prey on each other with the intent to kill and devour their defeated opponents. If the winners continue to prey on others, the strongest will survive. This is basically survival of the fittest that is compressed to the extreme."

Helena nodded. "It is not that easy to successfully raise gu. Our mother mentioned that there are specific cultivation techniques that can assist in the process and ensure that the ultimate winner will not only be able to remain alive despite sustaining so many wounds, but also absorb the bodies of its enemies and break past its life limits. The latter is the most crucial part. If there is a way to make the poisonous creature evolve and sublimate without going through such a tedious process, then raising gu is not that useful."

Veronica recognized that there was another aspect about this strange poisonous creature rearing process that possessed great significance.

"One of the core purposes of this raising gu business is the accumulation of venom. All of the poison carried by the critters will get injected or devoured by the surviving winners. If they don't die on the spot due to taking in so many harmful substances, the last survival may possess a level of venom that equals or maybe surpasses the total amount of poison carried by all of the individual creatures at the start."

"That is true. Do you know how this is possible?"

"No." Veronica frowned. "I guess it can't be done without involving the manipulation of E energy, Biologically speaking, any normal organism would have died from concentrating so much poison, especially if they come from different creatures. I think that all of this fighting that takes place in



the jar represents a ritual of sorts that helps to evolve the winners just enough to withstand all of the increasingly more

lethal poison."

"I think that is the case as well."

"You think?"

"Mother never taught me any specific methods related to gu cultivation. She told me that it is a particularly specialized but also disgusting form of cultivation. It is completely unsuited for me. The advantages of gu cultivation is that it is mainly a test of knowledge, technique and resource acquisition. It has very little demand for natural talent, as gu cultivators mainly rely on the talent and powers of the gu creatures that they bond with or use as cannon fodder."

That made a lot of sense. That sounded like a peculiar form of contract cultivation. As soon as Veronica framed it in this manner, it all made sense.

She could also understand why Helena brought up gu cultivation in this conversation.

"I see. You think that the principles of poison gu cultivation can also be applied to promoting the growth of demons.""

"That is correct. Mother did say that the philosophy and principles of gu cultivation is more universal than it sounds. For example, the time she spent while she was a member of the Five Scrolls Compact was a human form of gu cultivation. The Great Temple constantly absorbed talents from the rest of the galaxy, only to pit them against each other in cruel tests and examinations. Those who failed to defeat their competitors will either get killed or reassigned. Over time, the most ruthless, brilliant, competent and luckiest of cultivators will rise to the top. Our mother was just one of a small group of high-ranking members of the Wood Shrine who won every battle that mattered and plundered as much wealth and other benefits from her defeated rivals." Veronica still knew far too little about his mother's past life. Her true life. What little she heard about the infamous cult painted a picture of needless cruelty. While the extreme gu cultivation approach might have allowed the Five Scrolls Compact to be led by strong and ruthless cultivators who knew how to scheme against others, there were very obvious disadvantages to this policy.

Everyone who stayed a cultist long enough became completely nuts!

No normal human would be able to retain their sanity after going through so much internal competition.

The culling of the weak drove the survivors to desperation. They might work harder, but only so that they could outpace their peers and make sure they weren't next on the chopping block!

It was no wonder the Five Scrolls Compact ultimately collapsed in such a spectacular manner. Humans weren't gu insects, and they could never stand to be treated in such

an awful way.

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gains to forcefully push past its limitations and break through the next major cultivation rank!

"I will take care of the design of the application of life energy" Veronica promised. "I am not an expert in this matter, but I know enough fundamentals that I am confident I can form an improvised solution. I should also be able to design a mechanism for the application of death energy, but I could use your input to make it better."

"You shall have it." The Helcat replied as she became increasingly more interested in this collaborative project. "There are still many questions and uncertainties. For example, the gu container may not work at all. It is possible that we lack the crucial secrets that can make the rituals

work according to our intentions. Even if they are adequate enough, we do not know how many Minor Demons we should place in the gu container to accumulate enough critical mass for the eventual winner to make a sudden breakthrough. Then there is the time period. It may take weeks, months or even years for this process to finish."

The Cyborg Cat grimaced a bit, but soon schooled her expression. "These are all valid concerns. I would ideally like to achieve quick successes, but I am fine if I have to wait a while before we can perfect the demon gu cultivation process. I do not require an

immediate supply of Middle Demons as I still have an existing reserve from a different source. Sooner or later, I will run out, so I hope I can get this supply chain of Middle Demons up and running by that time."

"I will help you, little sister. I did not think much of it, but now that you have directed my attention to it, I think that I can harvest unexpected gains from this research..."

Chapter 6595 Variation is the Spice of Life

Veronica and Helena had lived alongside each other for years, but they never collaborated with each other as extensively as this time.

Both siblings became incredibly enthused about their new collaboration project.

Veronica deeply wanted to invest in a reliable method of producing Middle Demons on a regular basis. In fact, her sights did not stop here. She was already thinking about the next step.

The demon gu cultivation approach that she was trying to invent from scratch should not be limited to producing Middle Demons.

The Demon Summoning Circle explicitly mentioned the existence of Greater Demons and Demon Kings.

If they truly corresponded to the level of a True God and a God King respectively, then the ability to produce them on a regular basis was a game changer!!

In theory, poison gu cultivation was one of the several pathways to becoming a True God. It should be capable of producing a poisonous creature that had breached one of the biggest barriers that separated mortals from gods.

It was actually possible to artificially breed True God-level creatures!

Of course, the methods and resources needed to produce such a high-end poisonous creature was anything but trivial. Veronica could not even imagine the scale of the ritual, the sophisticated use of runes and the large quantities of powerful creatures, the gigantic amount of E energy and the huge amount of time needed to produce such a god-like creature.

Trying to convert a process originally designed to breed powerful poisonous organisms to cultivating a powerful Greater Demon would be even more difficult!

At least poison gu cultivation had an existing track record. Perhaps the Five Scrolls Compact and the Red Collective may have preserved a few records of this exotic cultivation approach that latecomers such as Veronica could reference.

She was pretty sure that no one had come up with an idea as crazy as artificially producing high-quality demons through a similar approach!

If Demoncasting and Demonforging was not so obscure to the point that almost all of its traces had become lost over time, then others may have already pioneered this means in the past.

Veronica therefore felt safe in the assumption that she and her eldest sister were truly breaking new ground.

At this time, the two were still at the beginning of their ambitious effort. There was no need to consider the production of Greater Demons at all when they had yet to come

up with a working proof of concept.

They still needed to find out whether it was possible to convert a bunch of Minor Demons into Middle Demons through their chosen method!

"I will get started on designing and crafting the demon gu container. Veronica said. "The principal material that I will be using is Unending Alloy. Our mother has claimed most of it that can be found for herself, but I can still take out just enough to make 5 containers in the specific dimensions. They

won't be as big as I wish due to resource constraints, but I will make sure I can make the most out of what little I can requisition."

Back in the Red Ocean, Ves could obtain all of the hyper materials he wanted. It was a little more difficult to import large quantities of highly desirable high-grade hypers, but ever since his income and reputation had soared, it would only take a little more time for him to gain the goodies he needed!

Here in the Milky Way, Veronica was working under much more limited circumstances. Even if the Oblivion Empress managed to import a large batch of Red Ocean-exclusive hyper materials recently, she had already reserved them for her own projects.

There was no way their mother would be generous enough to give away these precious and incredibly scarce hyper materials just to indulge her children.

What Veronica was attempting to create was massive for herself, but Cynthia probably thought of her research project was probably child's play!

The Cyborg Cat was pretty sure that what she attempted to do with the collaboration of Helena did not escape the True God's perception.

However, so long as the Oblivion Empress did not send a missive that indicated that she approved or disapproved of this initiative, Veronica could safely assume that she could continue with her efforts without interruption.

The two cats soon began to split up as they split up their responsibilities.

Helena began to gather a larger amount of souls so that she could convert them into Minor Demons.

She just happened to learn the Soul Whip technique from Veronica and already began to modify it to suit her needs.

With an abundance of 'test subjects' in her grasp, Helena could readily test her changes and make further adjustments depending on the feedback!

Under such ideal conditions, Helena's Soul Whip quickly deviated from the pure template and began to take on a life of its own. The death element suffused the intangible whip, causing it to torment the souls on a deeper level!

However, her alterations were still far from perfect, as evidenced by the souls that she

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"Hm. This is trickier than I thought." Helena furrowed her brows.

She continued to puzzle out how she could make her Soul Whip better at bringing captured souls to the depths of despair. Only by speeding up this process would she be able to increase the efficiency of producing demons.

It did not cost too much for her to produce a single Minor Demon, but what if her little sister needed more?

If Helena took on the obligation to supply tens of thousands if not hundreds of thousands of Minor Demons, then even she could get drained of her energy! Therefore, Helena did not despise this process and tried to make it as efficient and optimized as possible.

The Daughter of Death took after her mother in this regard. One of the reasons why the Oblivion Empress was able to succeed as a qi cultivator where everyone else failed was because she made sure to master every important technique as thoroughly as

possible!

Cynthia always made sure to hammer home this lesson into Helena's head. "In an environment where many cultivators learned from the common base of knowledge that the Sacred Scrolls have so graciously passed on, it is not enough to gain proficiency in the arts. If you want to stay ahead of the competition and never fall too far behind, you must comprehend more knowledge, master the arts that suit you best, and combine these efforts into original new techniques that do not exist in anyone's library. Only then can you take your enemies by surprise, overpower their best techniques and maintain your standing in the long run. Those who solely rely on mastering the inheritances of the past will always get swept away by the geniuses who are brave and hardworking enough to create their own paradigms."

Young Helena looked impressed. "That reminds me a lot about how the current mech industry operates. There are so many mech designers that have been able to accomplish great feats. It is amazing to think of how many new technologies they developed in the span of just 400 years."

"The rebels of the Compact have the right idea." Cynthia half-smiled and half-sneered. "The power of a united technological civilization is larger than the efforts of a collection of selfish cultivators. It is not impossible for the latter to defeat the former, but these cultivators need to do far more than learning past theory and methods without having any serious intention to continue the development of their arts. The more you learn, the more your cognition becomes captured by the past." "Is that why you refrain from teaching Veronica anything serious?" "Partially. The other reason is that she has no need for my lessons. She has the Mech Designer System that I have gifted to her long ago. She can already gain enough knowledge from her special trinket by earning it through her own efforts. She needs to be able to stand on her own four naws. If she approaches me for a handout once.

she will do so again. I do not desire for her to be reduced to a beggar who cannot do anything great without receiving my guidance. That is not the posture of a strong

cultivator."

"I see."

The Oblivion Empress pinned her daughter with an intimidating stare. "If Veronica shifts her target to you, I hope that you will keep my words in mind and refrain from sharing too much. Even if you possess enough knowledge to solve her problems, you should keep it to yourself and leave her to work out her own solutions. I have observed her long enough to understand that she is largely capable of doing so as long as her goals are not excessive. If she cannot invent a solution at her current state, then she is not ready yet for the undertaking that she has in mind. Let your younger sister fumble around. Failure will only feed into her growth"

"Very well. I shall keep your instruction in mind."

Whether Helena withheld knowledge about gu cultivation from Veronica was unclear.

Perhaps Veronica suspected that her sister held back a thing or two about the details of gu cultivation, but she did not voice any complaints.



The Cyborg Cat already knew that it would be useless for her to make a fuss about it. Helena most definitely acted on their mother's orders. Nothing would change unless Cynthia finally changed her mind, which was unlikely to happen anytime soon. Rather than creating tension between Veronica's relationship with Helena and making herself sound weak in front of the Oblivion Empress' imperceptible attention, it was better to work honestly.

Veronica actually did not mind that she would have to develop the concept of demon

gu cultivation by herself.

She was quite confident she could develop it on her own. Her design philosophy already gave her plenty of understanding of what it took to create life from scratch as well as promote its growth and development.

Demons were still relatively strange and unfamiliar to her, but they still shared a few

traits in common with other intangible life forms.

That was enough for Veronica.

She combined her scattered knowledge on multiple different fields and crudely mashed them together to form the initial plan of a demon gu container. "Traditional poison gu containers basically consist of jars." The Cyborg Cat recalled as

she called up a design interface. "There are definitely good reasons to maintain this shape, but what if I turn it into a mech?"

Instead of working on unfamiliar containers, Veronica would much rather design and fabricate a bunch of mechs instead!

This would not only allow her to impart her design philosophy to her experimental

products to the fullest, but also turn it into a 'living mech' that was able to perform advanced instructions!

This was Veronica's answer to runes. She had already discovered that runes were able to substitute some of the functions of a living mech and vice versa.

In fact, Veronica even developed a theory that all applications related to design philosophies was ultimately grounded in runes.

Mech designers just weren't aware of them, but through secret shenanigans involving the Kingdom of Mechs or the Red Kingdom, they were able to leverage their mech design cultivation to automatically embed the necessary runese in their design workings!

This was a very advanced theory that Veronica created to explain the root of the mech design profession. She had yet to gather enough conclusive evidence to prove its validity, but she had gathered a few clues here and there that increased her confidence level in her personal theory.

One of the conclusions that Veronica could draw from this was that it wasn't necessary for her to mess around with runes. She could achieve similar results by designing the right living mech!

"The outcome won't be as consistent as I want due to the lack of precision engineering, but who cares. Variation is the spice of life!"

Chapter 6596 Demon Gu Container Design

Veronica was under great time pressure.

Less than four days later, Ves and Ketis intended to initiate a Mission-clearing marathon at the same time.

That was a big deal. Ves not only intended to earn a large amount of AP, but also wanted to learn new stuff. This was a crucial opportunity for him to make a lot of advancements while practically no time had passed in reality.

In order to make the most out of this special occasion, Ves needed to come up with several initiatives that he could work on during the time he was spending inside the

System Space.

Given that the process of demon gu cultivation would likely take months if not years to complete and yield results, Ves already thought of using the System Space to let the demon gu containers do their work!

Once the marathon came to an end, Veronica would hopefully be able to withdraw the demon gu containers and hopefully bring out a couple of recently evolved Middle Demons worth several hundred Ascension Points.

This was why Veronica came under a lot of time pressure. She needed to complete all of the gu containers in less than 4 days.

The tight deadline made her feel as if she had entered a mech design contest again. Once Veronica adopted a familiar mindset, she became fully focused on completing the most essential requirements in as little time as possible.

"This is no time to be meticulous."

She needed to work quickly in order to produce a handful of readily usable gu containers once it was time for Ves to meet his appointment with the premier swordmaster of the Larkinson Clan.

While Ves could always reschedule his appointment with Ketis, he did not think he had much time left in the Red Ocean to fool around.

The sooner he completed this marathon, the faster he could use his new gains into improving the strength of his clan!

Since speed was of the essence, Veronica ruthlessly shed any fanciful notions about his latest design project. She only wanted to design the bare minimum that was necessary in order to make his idea work.

Her paw began to trace a number of lines and contours on the projected design interface.

She initially formed the shape of a rather archaic-looking jar. It possessed a simple cylindrical shape that was slightly wider at the top. It even came with a large lid that could still be sealed shut with the help of modern mechanical scaling mechanisms.

What Veronica designed so far was a large-sized version of a jar that she imagined that ancient gu cultivators used to produce their deadly poisonous creatures.

"This will be the base of my mech design." The Cyborg Cat determined.

She did not waste any time in perfecting the shape and dimensions of the jar. She instead began to design the frame of a mech around this object.

"I am not designing a combat mech, so I can skip the arms. There is no reason to make it fly, so I can skip the flight system as well. As for legs, there is no need to invest too much in them as there is no reason to make it run fast. It should be able to remain stable and upright for extended periods of time, so it is better to add four legs instead of two. That will massively simplify the balancing problem."

The product he was designing only met the definition of a mech on a technical level.

In practice, it was probably one of the most useless mechs that mech designer could

envision!

Anyone who thought that an awful mech like this had any value on the battlefield should be shot for treason!

If Veronica did not intend to impart it with the magical property of being able to promote the gu cultivation of Minor Demons, then I was truly an awful waste of

resources!

Although the mech designer inside Veronica screamed that it was an abomination of a mech design that should be burned on the stake, she still forced herself to rush the mech design to completion!

Since Veronica was shameless enough to skip out on every non-essential part of the system that could be found in more conventional mechs, it did not take much time to complete the first iteration of the design.

The end result could charitably be described as a demimech that might be useful in a logistical center.

The starting premise was still the same. The demimech's main structure consisted of a large jar.

Four squat but curled legs extended from underneath that could provide basic locomotion.

However, the weak mech engine and rudimentary design of the legs meant that the demimech moved as slow as a snail!

In order to ensure this abomination of a demimech could still be categorized as a mech flat and compact cockpit to the bottom of one of

at all, Veronica made sure to mount.

the sides.

This technically made the demimech pilotable, but Veronica actually did not intend for

any human mech pilot to waste his time on controlling the machine.

She integrated it with a rudimentary AI whose only job was to move to different

locations on command.

In fact, the traversal speed of this demimech was so slow that it was better to rely on floater platforms and other solutions to move it around.

"It's not important. It is fine as long as it meets the definition of a mech."

Veronica made an earnest enough effort to approach her latest work as a mech design, so she was able to exert considerable control over its E-technology.

She utilized the knowledge she gained about demons and tried to turn the demimech into a qualified demon gu container.

To be honest, Veronica did not fully understand what she was doing. She completely let herself go and relied mostly on her instincts, her rudimentary and flawed understanding of gu cultivation, her occasional bouts of madness and whatever scrap of science and technology that she deemed at least marginally relevant to this difficult problem.

The result quickly turned into a messy hodgepodge of improvised solutions that should hopefully yield the desired result.

It didn't matter if she had no idea whether it would work. The act of creating a living mech was to translate potential ideas into a living vessel.

That meant that once the living mech came to life, it became a product that was greater than the sum of its parts!

Life always found a way. As long as the demimech became alive, internalized its existing capabilities and perfected them over the course of its growth, it may be able to transform a defective experiment into a functional design application!

So long as it worked, Ves did not care about whether the mech design failed to meet any

other requirements.

Since Veronica held herself back and tried to prune as many unnecessary elements from the demimech designs as possible, she managed to complete the design in less than a

day.

The physical structure hardly took any time to design at all. All of the parts were made out of simple shaped alloy or very standard off-the-shelf parts that the fleet of the Oblivion Empire already had in stock.

She actually spent more time on designing the demon gu cultivation aspect. Due to time constraints, Veronica did not bother to design an Ultimate Module that could facilitate the gu cultivation process. She lacked enough empirical information about it to know what she needed to design to augment the formation of a Middle

Demon.

"I should start with the most basic process and see how it goes before thinking about applying any advanced solutions."

Even without the inclusion of an Ultimate Model, the Cyborg Cat still considered her work to be a sixth generation living mech.

She had programmed the spiritual foundation of the demimech to perform a lot of actions to prevent any accidents and to make sure the trapped Minor Demons did not

die prematurely.

Veronica chose to add two design spirits to the demimech.

She added Gaia for the purpose of regulating and potentially injecting life energy to keep the Minor Demons healthy and to strengthen them in other ways aside from mindlessly

devouring their own kind.

Helena naturally also became the design spirit of this mech-shaped jar.

As promised, the eldest sister stopped by the design lab to assist with the design and control of additional solutions based on her formidable comprehension and affinity towards death energy.

"The intertwining of life and death can produce many powerful miracles." Helena commented as she worked to augment the incomplete mech design with the help of Veronica's expertise. "Gu cultivation can be considered a ritual that combines the extremes of these two phenomena to produce a breakthrough under extreme circumstances. In order to produce the best possible outcome, only the unworthy must die. Another important rule that needed to be implemented was that all of the nutrients of the loser must be absorbed by the winner to the greatest possible degree."

Just like how poison gu cultivation was based on accumulating lots of poisonous substances into increasingly fewer creatures, the demimech needed to be able to promote the concentration of power between the murderous Minor Demons to the greatest possible extent.

With the help of the two design spirits, Veronica already became a lot more confident that her implementation would be able to yield successful results. However, the efficiency of the initial process likely had a lot of room for improvement.

Veronica could work on them slowly over time. She still needed to gather a lot of data and form useful conclusions before she could work on an improved demon gu container. Once she became assured that the basic demimech design looked viable enough to work in reality, the Cyborg Cat did not hesitate to fabricate the demimechs.

She skipped out on sleep and worked day and night with the workshops of the flagships

of the Oblivion Empire to produce her works.

Normally, fabricating a complete mech by hand usually took multiple days, but Veronica was able to pump out 5 of them by the time the deadline had drawn close!

She was able to produce so many of them in a couple of days because she started early

enough and because the demimech design was much smaller and simpler than other second-class mech designs.



After all, when it came down to it, the mech frame basically comprised of a large hollow jar with legs, a cockpit and other bare essentials.

Her formidable fabrication capabilities also contributed to the speed. With the help of

the workshop facilities that the Oblivion Empire had recently brought to a higher standard, Veronica was able to add her own charm to her handmade products.

She tried to turn all of them into masterwork mechs, but it appeared that she was aiming too high this time.

The mech design was too rushed and poor in quality to produce such excellent works!

If Ves wanted to fabricate a masterwork, then she should at least start with a more

proper mech design that had been meticulously refined and optimized over a span of at least half a year!

When Helena learned that Ves had completed his set in time, she inhabited her Helcat avatar once again and paid a visit to the workshop.

"So these are your so-called 'demon gu containers. They look... as if you crudely attempted to fuse ancient mysticism with modern mech engineering" "Your description is quite apt. That is mostly what I have done, though you should

replace ancient mysticism with my own ripoff version of gu cultivation. I have no idea how those weirdos did this in the past, so I just tried to monkey my own version together based on an awful amount of assumptions. I cannot guarantee whether it will actually work, but I have a good feeling about them. Even if they can produce a Middle Demon in the end, they should still be able to improve the strength and quality of Minor Demons.

The one that we produced at the start was still awfully weak and pathetic. If I am limited to using Minor Demons for my Demoncasting projects, then I at least want them to be as strong as possible so that they can produce more dramatic effects."

"Let's see how well they can hold the Minor Demons that I have prepared. By the way, do

these mechs have a name?"

"Yes. They are called Demon Mixers."

Chapter 6597 Demon Mixer Mark I

Made out of precious Unending alloy, the 5 Demon Mixers stood proudly in their crude, fat and ugly forms.

Ordinary mechs easily towered over the demimech-sized contraptions.

To even call the Demon Mixers a mech was an insult to the entire mech community!

Despite the complete lack of combat capabilities, Veronica still felt proud that she was able to improvise a viable solution together in so little time.

She had a good feeling about them. Even if they failed to produce a Middle Demon in the first attempt, Veronica could always tweak the mech design or the other variables in order to dial in the right settings.

The most important part was that the living mechs possessed enough vitality to fulfill their functions.

The structure of the jar-shaped torso was also specially designed to contain a large amount of Minor Demons.

Even if they attacked the inner lining of the jar all at once, there was no chance for them to be able to break through in a short amount of time!

While they could theoretically breach their cage if they persisted in their breakout attempts, there was no way these irrational and unruly Minor Demons would leave each other alone.

They were all violent and murderous to the extreme!

When stuffed together in a small and confined space, they would definitely turn their claws against each other first long before thinking about attacking anything else!

If the battle royale proceeded according to plan, then the final winner received enough tempering from all of the fighting and absorbed enough nutrients from its defeated foes to evolve into a Middle Demon.

Veronica was not confident that her Demon Mixer would be able to contain a Middle Demon.

The quality of the demimech was poor, and she did not use optimal materials to construct the container. There was a good chance that a Middle Demon may be able to breach the cage.

However, Veronica already prepared another solution to this problem.

One of the peculiar traits about the Demon Mixer was that it was a post-living mech! Veronica decided not to impart a conscious living personality into the demimech. Since it was a machine that was never actually meant to host a mech pilot, she felt it would be pure torture for the Demon Mixer to live out a miserable existence.

There was also another reason why she deliberately turned the Demon Mixer into a second skin mech.

She hoped that once the Middle Demon successfully managed to emerge through the demon cultivation process, it would immediately merge with the Demon Mixer, thereby causing it to get demonized but at the same time fix the demonic entity in place!

Once the Middle Demon fused with the most useless demimech that Veronica had ever designed, the combat power of the transformed machine should not be too high!

It would be easy to suppress and contain the demimech through mundane means. This saved Veronica a lot of resources and allowed her to lighten his burdens.

The only questionable part was whether she could successfully separate the demon from the Demon Mixer.

For that purpose, she deliberately designed the demimech to 'eject' its spiritual foundation on command.

This should hopefully work on Middle Demon as well!

If not, then the Cyborg Cat might have to use cruder means to separate the two from each other. The Middle Demon would likely incur significant damage and lead to reduction in quality.

She currently had no idea if these clever mechanisms were sound enough to work, She therefore looked more and more forward to putting the Demon Mixers to the test!

Now that the Helcat saw in person that her little sister had successfully completed the 'demon gu containers' before the deadline, she proceeded to deliver her own results. "I have tried my best to gather a sufficient amount of fairly strong souls and whip them all into Minor Demons. This was not simple. You should be lucky that I can reliably harvest qualified souls from the star sectors around the Nyxian Gap. They are so highly populated that there are many Journeyman Mech Designers and Senior Mech Designers. Many of them are dying on a daily basis. There are also a small number of expert pilots who died as well, either through normal warfare or by running out of lifespan. I found that the souls from these powerful soldiers take a lot longer to demonize. If I hadn't improved and transformed your Soul Whip technique into a much more effective version, I would have failed to transform them before the deadline."

Veronica looked intrigued. "You improved the Soul Whip that much? Can you demonstrate to me, sister?"

"Sure. I will give you a taste of my latest torture instrument. It will be painful, but I think you can handle a single application."

"Wait, what are you-MYAAAOOW!" Veronica jumped in surprise! "That is so freaky! How can the touch of a feather make me feel as if my life is about to get drained?!"

Although Veronica would not get caught off guard to such an extent the second time, she was still shocked at how much Helena's modified technique could elicit such a

strong reaction!

The effect on purely intangible beings such as souls and Minor Demons should be a lot stronger!

The Helcat smugly grinned as a dark feather floated above her feline head. "I have been trying to figure out how to drive the souls into despair much faster by exposing them to death energy. Even if they have already died once, the souls still instinctively fear the threat of complete annihilation. Death energy has the potential to do that, so it is one of the universal means to scare them out of their wits. The problem is that I do not actually want to kill them. I just want them to become terrorized to the point of triggering the demonization process. This is why I eventually decided to concentrate a large amount of death energy into the Soul Whip, but lighten its application so that the contact is very light and soft. This turned out to be the right direction, so I continued to optimize it. until I abandoned the whip structure in favor of a feather."

This was an ingenious solution. Veronica was already thinking about whether she should copy a page out of her eldest sister's book.

The theory was rather simple. Souls possessed a limited degree of perception as well. If they were placed next to a threatening True God, then they would definitely become a lot more frightened than if they were placed next to an ordinary person.

The feather manifested by Helena might look like a soft and gentle object, but it actually concentrated so much death energy that baseline human might be able to lose much of his life if he touched it for a period of time!

It may even annihilate souls upon prolonged contact!

"What is it called?"

"I am calling it the Death Feather for now. It sounds adequate enough. The secret to using the Death Feather is to make no contact to very brief contact at a time. I want the feeling of certain death to lightly caress the frightened souls. They should still be able to withstand the damage of faint contact, but they will definitely feel much more threatened than if they are struck by a regular Soul Whip."

"I see." Veronica looked enlightened. "The Soul Whip technique is originally designed to function as a pure punishment and torture solution. It is never specifically designed to promote demonization. This Death Feather of yours is much more suitable to promote this development because it produces an enormous amount of psychological torment. Repeatedly making souls feel as if they are one step away from complete annihilation is definitely effective at making them feel as if they have no hope anymore."

The Cyborg Cat was surprised at how quickly Helena managed to devise such an effective solution.

However, another part of her felt that it was only right for the daughter of Cynthia Larkinson to be so good at devising her own improved techniques.

"Anyway, I take it that the successful development of your Death Feather technique

means that you can reliably mass produce Minor Demons."

"I can." The Helcat nodded in conformation. "However, do not forget what I told you before. Transferring them from the Milky Way to the Red Ocean costs a large amount of energy. It is still better to wait until you have found an effective way to consolidate them into Middle Demons before attempting a costly transfer."

"I haven't forgotten, sister. There are plenty of humans and aliens being killed across the frontline. The Hexers have fielded a huge amount of Valkyrie mechs in the Middle Zones, so you should still have plenty of opportunities to harvest souls on the frontlines." "That is true, but most of them are not good enough." Helena frowned. "Most of the casualties consist of ordinary humans or aliens. Exposure to E energy radiation and limited cultivation has already made them stronger, but the vast majority have yet to enter the first major cultivation rank. That may change over time, but for now, do not expect me to harvest too many souls that are strong enough. Expert pilots are so good that very little of them die on the battlefield. There also aren't enough Journeymen and Seniors stationed in the frontlines for me to harvest."

This limitation was beginning to annoy Veronica more and more. It would be best if there was a way to obtain Minor Demons from weaker souls.

She could think about this problem later. It was best if she focused on the immediate

task at hand.

"How many Minor Demons have you produced?"

"213. They vary considerably in strength, abilities, temperament and more. Most of them are derived from mech designers, so I am not too impressed with their demonized combat capabilities. The only ones worth my appreciation are those converted from expert pilots. They should be the favorites to win the battle royales inside the Demon

Mixers."

Veronica nodded. "I am inclined to agree as well, but don't count out the others so quickly. Who knows whether any of the other Minor Demons developed any weird talents or techniques. Still, let's do our best to spread them out so that they can attempt to defeat everyone else without having to compete against their closest peers." "That is a good idea. How would you like to distribute the Minor Demons?"

"I already formed a plan for this. There is one indication that leads me to believe that 1

Middle Demon is worth 20 Minor Demons. This may be a clue that this is the minimum ratio to make this demon gu cultivation attempt work. The First Demon Mixer should therefore store 20 Minor Demons. Can you transfer them right away?"

"I can."

When Helena carefully injected the prepared Minor Demons into the Demon Mixer, the two felines waited for any of the Minor Demons to slip through an unnoticed crack and escape.

That did not happen.

"Well, the first test is a success." Veronica declared as she closely monitored the

demimech. "The Demon Mixer has proven that it can successfully contain 20 Minor Demons. I can even begin to feel that they have initiated hostilities against each other." Veronica did not attempt to peek inside to see what was happening in real time. This form of gu cultivation was a ritual that had to be treated with respect. Outsiders should not attempt to peek what was happening inside the jar. That might break a taboo and ruin the ritualistic process.

"How many Minor Demons do you want to insert into the next Demon Mixers?"

"The second machine should contain 40 Minor Demons. The third machine should contain 80 Minor Demons. The fourth machine should contain 20 Minor Demons with the addition of 10,000 uncorrupted souls. The fifth machine should contain 40 Minor Demons with the addition of 100,000 uncorrupted souls."

The Helcat lazily nodded when Veronica mentioned the numbers for the second and

third Demon Mixer, but she became a lot more surprised when she heard the figures for the last two machines!

"Why do you want to mix in additional souls in the gu containers?"

"I want to see whether the addition of additional nutrients will increase the success rate of producing Middle Demons. I also want to see if the resulting Middle Demon will become a lot stronger after absorbing so many additional souls."

Chapter 6598 Filling Up The Jars

Shortly after Veronica fabricated the 5 Demon Mixers, Helena needed to stuff them with the specified amount of Minor Demons as ordinary souls if applicable,

The Daughter of Death expressed a little hesitation about the use of the latter, but Veronica quickly persuaded her that this was for the greater good.

"Let the deceased play out their final value to the living they have left behind."

Principles were important, but survival was even more important. Everything Veronica did in relation to Demoncasting was ultimately meant to give her counterpart in the Red Ocean a better chance to survive the crises engulfing the Red Ocean.

"Will the souls even fit inside the Demon Mixers?" Helena questioned.

"I don't know." Veronica honestly replied. "Just try it out. You can stop early if the Demon Mixers have reached their capacity. By the way, make sure to place the soul of an expert pilot in each of the five Demon Mixers whenever possible."

After a bit more coaxing, the Daughter of Death proceeded to fill them all up with the required amount of souls.



Both of them paid careful attention to the first Demon Mixer as it began to accommodate 20 Minor Demons.

These were all recently transformed beings of pure malevolence and aggression. The vast majority of them were originally deceased Journeymen, with only a pair of demons that were originally derived from Seniors.

There were surprisingly a lot of Journeyman Mech Designers in the Yeina Star Cluster that never made any further progress in their careers.

For them to die after forming their initial design philosophies yet failing to reach the threshold of a Senior Mech Designer seemed perplexing to Ves at first.

Then he learned that the vast majority of them consisted of third-class mech designers. That explained a lot.

Third-class Journeymen were predominantly baseline humans who were too poor to afford a set of augmentations.

Without the cognitive enhancements that could increase their learning ability and mental processing power, it was truly too difficult for them to maintain a high level of productivity.

They took decades to learn knowledge that second-raters could master in a few years. They designed very simple and basic third-class mechs that did not offer a lot of room for more expensive and impactful forms of technological expression.

They were also predominantly dependent mech designers who could only participate in the design projects formulated by their superiors.

Unless these third-class mech designers managed to showcase enough potential to get promoted to a second-class mech designer, it shouldn't be too surprising that they failed to get much further than the rank of Journeyman!

Ves still remembered that during the days when he was a citizen of the Bright Republic, he looked up to Senior Mech Designers as the top of their profession.

While it was not impossible for third-class mech designers to attain the rank of Master Mech Designers, they usually immigrated to second-rate states as soon as they showcased enough talent and potential to succeed.

Why would they voluntarily choose to stay in a third-rate state that possessed very limited wealth and growth opportunities?

In short, third-class mech designers who failed to transfer to a second-rate state mostly lived a miserable existence.

Their society did not have the luxury to uplift mech designers who lacked the competence and value to make themselves useful in the second-class mech industry. Veronica realized that she could have easily become one of these forgotten losers. Becoming a Journeyman was an accomplishment, but it was already the end of the road for these miserable third-raters. Most of them probably died with regrets in their hearts. Even if becoming a Journeyman Mech Designer was the equivalent of becoming a well-respected senior engineer in a typical third-rate state, their good incomes and slightly upscale living conditions could not make up for their inability to catch up to the greatest examples of the mech industry.

Instead of becoming a dignified Master Mech Designer or a legendary Star Designer, these third-raters could only lament their baseline human limitations and their lack of opportunities to become greater.

If they were born in a second-rate state, then they would have been able to grasp much greater opportunities to promote to the rank of Senior and maybe even Master in their lifetimes.

Instead, their starting point in a third-rate state had already locked them in a life of insignificance and mediocrity.

Only a handful of exceptional third-raters such as Veronica, Ketis and most recently Maikel Larkinson all managed to demonstrate their brilliance and became qualified to join the first-class mech industry.

They were very much the exception rather than the rule. They were statistical outliers who did not amount to much in the mech industry as a whole.

The vast majority of third-class mech designers would never have a chance to experience the true splendor of mechs.

With no prospect of advancing to godhoods, these individuals ultimately had no choice but to surrender to reality and understand that they were no different from other

well-educated engineering professionals.

Veronica sympathised quite a lot with these third-class mech designers, but that did not stop her from requesting Helena to convert them all into Minor Demons!

In fact, these third-class Journeymen and Seniors should feel lucky that Veronica had the need for their services after their demise!

Instead of dying without being able to make a single noticeable difference in the course of human history, these souls went through a powerful transformation that made them a lot stronger and deadlier than before!

Now, they were about to get stuffed inside the Demon Mixers where they would gain the chance to fight for a chance of attaining greatness!

If everything went right, the winner would devour the nutrients of their defeated foes and successfully evolve into a Major Demon, which was practically equivalent to a

Master Mech Designer in terms of life level!

This was an unimaginably high position to mech designers who previously never had a chance of attaining such an exalted rank,

Sure, the souls of all of these 'lucky' mech designers first had to be tortured by the Death Feather before undergoing an irreversible process of demonization that stripped them of all of their rationality, but these were mere details compared to their brand-new

futures!

Once the Major Demons came into existence, Ves would definitely Demoncast them into all manner of powerful D-mechs and D-arms.

This way, the transformed demons would be able to make massive contributions in the battles to come.

With these thoughts in mind, Ves no longer felt so bad about the ordeals these Minor Demons had to overcome.

"It is starting" The Helcat mentioned as she floated besides the other cat. "I can feel the onset of death inside the Demon Mixer. The Minor Demons have already begun to brutalize each other without any thought."

Veronica could not sense the precise conditions taking place inside. Even Helena could only gain a broad overview of the demon gu cultivation process despite the fact that she

was one of its design spirits.

This was a deliberate design choice in order to maintain the sanctity of the ritualistic killing process.

While neither of the two could see the Minor Demons fighting against each other

without any restraint, they were still able to guess what was happening by reading the energy fluctuations coming from the giant container.

"The first round of fighting will probably take a while to conclude. Veronica surmised. "These Minor Demons can withstand a lot of punishment. The small amount of life

energy injected by Gaia is also able to prolong their staying power."

Neither Veronica nor Helena knew how long it would take for the first Demon Mixer to

complete the process, but it shouldn't be as long as the other demimechs due to concentrating just 20 Minor Demons.

Helena proceeded to fill up the second Demon Mixer.

She felt a little more strain as she forcefully stuffed double the amount of Minor Demons than before.

The second Demon Mixer soon began to produce significantly stronger and more active energy fluctuations. Veronica even had the illusion that the machine was physically vibrating due to the intensity of all of the fighting.

"Continue." Veronica ordered.

Helena truly began to feel greater strain this time as she tried to stuff a whopping 80 Minor Demons inside a single sloppily designed and hastily fabricated demimech. Perhaps Veronica had been a little too greedy and ambitious for deciding to stuff 80 Minor Demons inside the third Demon Mixer!

It was clear that Helena was already approaching the maximum capacity of this specialized mech!

"Do you want to stop carly, Helena? I don't want to accidentally blow up the third Demon Mixer."

"No. I can still do it. The resistance is greater, but my strength is not weak."

In the end, Helena ultimately managed to concentrate 80 Minor Demons inside the third

giant jar. The machine subsequently began to release much stronger energy fluctuations!

Doubling the amount of Minor Demons had somehow caused the fighting intensity inside the third Demon Mixer to quadruple or more!

Veronica actually feared that the demimech could not hold on for long under all of this pressure.

She did not dare to leave it out of her sight. She maintained a certain degree of vigilance towards the third Demon Mixer and was ready to step in and contain the Minor Demons

that might be able to break free.

"Continue."

The fourth Demon Mixer soon became host of just 40 Minor Demons.

That was not all, though. Helena plucked around 10,000 souls taken from humans that had died in the Yeina Star Cluster in the past day.

She then tried to inject them into the fourth Demon Mixer!

Helena maintained a high degree of control over the weak and uncorrupted souls. They

were much easier to handle as they did not come from stronger humans. Since these souls never went through the process of demonization, they were less 'real' and 'substantial' in a metaphysical sense. This meant that a seemingly impossible feat of stuffing 10,000 of them in a single Demon Mixer actually became possible!

Veronica knew that there was little chance that something as outrageous as this could happen for humans who had reached the first or second major cultivation rank. They may look

indistinguishable from ordinary mortals in a physical sense, but they were much further apart in terms of spirituality!

Ordinary mortals were simply too weak, so Veronica was confident that they could be handled in bulk without generating any problems.

Once the fourth Demon Mixer became host to 20 Minor Demons and 10,000

uncorrupted souls!

Unlike the other Demon Mixers, the fourth one did not immediately generate strong fluctuations.

"The Minor Demons... aren't fighting against each other yet." Veronica made an educated

guess. "They are hunting down and devouring all of the souls in their range. That makes

sense as they are predators who will hunt down their natural prey before ever thinking about turning against each other."

This feast would probably take a long time to complete, so Veronica instructed her

eldest sister to fill up the final Demon Mixer.

With 40 Minor Demons and 100,000 ordinary souls stuffed inside a single jar, the fifth Demon Mixer seemingly became even more still!

Those lucky Minor Demons could easily devour as many souls as they wanted! Even with double the amount of Minor Demons as before, it would probably take a long

time for them to completely devour all of the ordinary souls!

Once these Minor Demons all gained a lot of strength due to fulfilling their core purpose and absorbing the nutrients from all of the souls, they should definitely grow stronger than before!

That meant that if they were finally ready to turn their hostility towards their own kind, their fights would definitely become a lot more destructive than before. There was a not-so-insignificant chance that the fifth Demon Mixer might not be able to

take it anymore and explode! "Hopefully that won't happen."

#### Chapter 6599 The Start of a new Marathon

Veronica was not entirely reassured with keeping the Demon Mixers out of her sight.

The importance of the initial 5 demon gu containers could not be overstated. They were his first attempt at exploring a potential path that could lead him to creating his own Major Demons.

These were powerful malevolent beings that already grew strong enough to form their own domains!

Even if their comprehensive power was inferior that of a battle-hardened ace pilot, just one of these Major Demons could easily depopulate an entire capital ship if it was able to roam freely!

The biggest reason why such a massacre had not occurred was because Major Demons were still unable to maintain their existence in the material realm.

Even so, their overall power was already enough to turn any object into a powerful D-arm!

How could Veronica not be greedy for their power?

Major Demons only existed to serve as input materials for all of the wonderful D-mechs and D-arms in her imagination!



The first step to mass producing Major Demons was to ensure that the Demon Mixers withstood the violence between all of the Minor Demons contained within their mech frames.

The first, second and third Demon Mixers produced non-stop activity as the Minor Demons inside of them fought like no abandon!

The fourth and fifth Demon Mixers had yet to show much activity, but it was only a matter of time before the Minor Demons devoured all of the uncorrupted souls.

Seeing that the Demon Mixers remained functional and intact for the time being, Veronica began to transfer them into the Vault of Eternity.

This was a rather costly move. Ves over in the Red Ocean had already emptied the Vault of as much unnecessary goods as possible.

This included a large stash of diluted and undiluted phasewater.

Even so, Veronica still had to buy additional storage capacity, causing her to rapidly expend all of the AP that she managed to scrounge by completing a few Missions in the past year.

It was not until she was left with just 9 Ascension Points that she managed to reluctantly squeeze all of the demimechs inside the Vault!

Veronica had deliberately designed the Demon Mixers to be as compact as possible. The lower their volume, the cheaper it was to put them away. This was why she did not

make the jar that formed most of the torso too tall and wide.

The Demon Mixers were also cleverly able to fold in their four legs so that they hardly remained visible as the demimechs completely settled on a flat surface.

"Alright, that's done. Hopefully we will be able to yield a result very soon,"

"I hope so too."

With this business taken care of, Veronica finally returned to the design lab in order to apply a few last-minute changes to the Rule Breaker Project.

The Cyborg Cat had not forgotten about the mandatory assignment imposed by her mother.

While Veronica had yet to find out whether it was possible to produce Major Demons through her own efforts, she and Helena had just proved that it was actually quite easy to convert the souls of fairly strong individuals into Minor Demons.

That was already enough justification for Veronica to modify the three versions of the Rule Breaker Project so that they gained Helena as a design spirit.

Just as Master Willix warned, the changes made by Veronica caused the Rule Breaker Project to become less pure and focused on accelerating the evolution of Carmine mech pilots.

Under the careful changes made by Veronica, the Rule Breaker mechs turned into secret soul harvesting tools.

Not only would these Carmine mechs become hungry for the souls of the opposition, they would also be on the lookout to harvest souls from their allies, their own battle partners and eventually even themselves if their use had come to an end!

Of course, the Carmine mechs wouldn't do so unscrupulously. Veronica at least made sure that the machines would not harvest the souls of protected groups such as the citizens of the Hex Federation and the Oblivion Empire.

Almost anyone else was fair game.

Veronica already looked forward to the huge amount of souls that Helena stood to gain.

In fact, the amount may be so astronomically high that it was impractical to use them to produce a lot of demons!

Helena could not hold onto too many souls at once. From what Ves could tell, the Daughter of Death was in a strange place as far as her strength was concerned.

There were some parts about her that made him think she was still a Domain Shaper, but she already exhibited traits that approached the level of a True God.

Even so, unless she became a True God in full, it was unlikely for her to hold a billion or a trillion souls.

Fortunately for the pair of siblings, the Nyxian Gap already provided her with a readily available alternative.

"The Nyxian Gap urgently needs to be replenished." Helena said as she observed Veronica at work. "Don't worry about how much it can hold. If there is not enough capacity, then we will find a way to expand it. The more souls in captivity, the better. We do not have the luxury of E energy radiation in the Milky Way Galaxy."

"Mhmm. This is a win-win-win solution for all of us. Our mother will likely be very pleased when she sees how quickly we can fill up the Nyxian Gap with our collaborative efforts."

Now that Veronica gained a better understanding about the Nyxian Gap and where it gained its energy, she was eager to accelerate its recovery and make it even stronger than before.

The Nyxian Gap was the stronghold of the Oblivion Empire!

Without the protection of this anomalous region, it would be too difficult for Veronica and her relatives on this side of the Oblivion Gate to stay safe against the many known and less-well-known threats of the Milky Way Galaxy.

Even if the Oblivion Empress persisted in her attempt to reconcile with the Five Scrolls Compact and become one of its highest leaders, it was still useful to maintain a strong and well-defended fief!

Although it did not take a lot of time for Veronica to complete the changes to the mech designs of the Rule Breaker Project, she still refrained from finishing her work.

"It's time."

Veronica did not finalize the Rule Breaker Project because she wanted Ves to mull over the design over the course of a few months and make small tweaks and improvements whenever it was convenient!

The additional design time gave Ves a lot of opportunities to make subtle improvements and fixes.

If everything went well, once Ves completed his Mission-clearing marathon, the Rule Breaker Project should hopefully become a bit more optimized and harmonious than before!

"Here we are again." Ves spoke.

He and Ketis finally reunited with each other again in the System Space. As far as the pair were concerned, time in the main university had effectively paused. Four days had passed since the latest System upgrade. Both Ves and Ketis knew that they were on the clock now. It cost 1 AP to extend their stay in the System, so neither of them were in the mood to stand still and waste their time on idle chatter.

"Let's head to the Vault of Eternity." Ves proposed. "I need to pick up a batch of special demimechs. They are my greatest hope of producing Major Demons."

Ketis curiously watched on as Ves began to withdraw one Demon Mixer after another. She winced as she observed their minimalistic and stripped-down designs.

"I cannot imagine how badly a mech pilot wants to kill himself if he attempts to pilot this machine." The swordmaster said. "Each of them is giving me a bad feeling. Even the Heavensword is growing a little upset at their proximity."

Ves briefly grimaced when he heard that. He did not want to wake up one day to see the Heavensword chopping up his precious demon gu containers!

This was especially the case when they had yet to produce a single Major Demon!

"I will make sure to place them in one of the large storage spaces of the Workshop of

Creation." He said in a clear tone of compromise. "I do not want to place them far away. I need to keep them under constant observation in case I need to intervene. This experiment is too important to me and my future ambitions."

Ketis let out a sigh. "I won't do anything to them unless it is an emergency or if I brought

it up to you beforehand."

The two mech designers slowly accompanied the five Demon Mixers as they slowly ascended the mountaintop with their four slow but stable legs.

Their speed was truly abysmal, and they weren't exactly the best at climbing mountains.

Ves constantly monitoring their movements and their balance. He regularly transmitted instructions when he felt they could navigate an easier path upwards.

Once they finally settled onto the large clearing that hosted the Workshop of Creation as well as the recently added Demoncasting Forge, the two mech designers began to face

each other.

"You know the plan, Ketis. Both of us have already accepted the missions that we can reasonably complete without spending too much of our time. We should get to work straight away. Let's see whether there are any ones that require our combined expertise

to solve."

There were numerous Missions that could go a lot smoothly with qualified help by their

side.

The only problem was that the Missions were only bound to a single user as far as they could determine.

This meant that Ves could invest days or weeks of his time on Ketis' mech design project, only to end up earning 0 AP in the process.

His only harvest would be the experience of working on a special swordsman mech.

The two were determined to avoid this. The marathon should be purely focused on productive activities. Anything that could interrupt or pull them away from this strengthening process had to be avoided whenever possible!

While the Missions had to be completed by a specific user who accepted them, that did

not mean that socialization was worthless.

They could still bounce ideas off each other and prevent themselves from getting affected by the psychological burden of long-time isolation.

Once the pair of mech designers set up their workplaces, they formally kicked off the

marathon!

Ves decided to warm up to the work by completing a bunch of easy D-grade Missions.

None of the ones that he accepted a few days ago posed any serious challenge to him.

He just had to design a handful of cheap mechs that technically met the requirements.

He knew that the System often awarded him with a bonus reward if he ever overcompleted his objectives.

However, for the sake of efficiency, Ves declined to waste too much time in raising the

quality of a product.

"It is better to strife for quantity rather than quality."

At least the rewards should be consistent. Trying to work hard to impress the System

may not pay off. Even if it did, the actual rewards would not be able to compensate for all of the time he had lost!

Besides, Ves still felt he could polish and improve his design capabilities by trying to raise the quality of his works even when he was in a hurry! Ketis had apparently made a similar decision. She was overly adventurous, and inspiration did not come easily for her. She believed it was best to strictly abide by the parameters of her Missions and avoid any undesirable deviations.

Soon enough, the pair cleaned up one Mission after another. They were already off to a

good start as they saw their AP accounts grow!

Ves no longer worried about whether he would still be able to afford extensions inside

the System Space.

His former student saved up a sizable sum of AP already. Ketis was effectively able to pay

the daily rent. The two did not rest on their laurels. They quickly went through the D-rank Missions until they could only begin to tackle the C-rank Missions.

Chapter 6600 Adaptation Period

When Ves started a Mission-clearing marathon, he immediately entered into another mindset.

Time became a lot more precious than usual. It only cost 1 AP to reside in the System Space for 24 hours. That did not sound like much, but 30 days easily amounted to 30 AP, which was not a small sum!

However, two people could bear this burden a lot easier than a single person.

At least that was what Ves hoped.

It turned out that he was dreaming too much.

"Damn," Ves said. "So it turns out that a single payment will only cover for a single user. If we both want to stay in the System at the same time, we have no choice but to pay 1 AP each."

Ketis did not look too surprised. "It was too good to be true. Don't you recognize the obvious loophole if it worked as you thought? What if we invited hundreds of mech designers into the System and let them design their mechs in the Workshop of Creation? They could easily earn a lot of AP which they could subsequently use to extend their stay for multiple years. During that time, they will have all of the time they need to complete a large amount of mech design projects. The mech industry and mech market will receive a massive shock once we finally come out and release amazing hyper mech designs."

She made a good point. Ves did not think about abusing the System to this degree in the past because he was still extremely reluctant to bring other users into the Mech Designer System.

Even now, he had yet to consider the idea of inviting Gloriana, even though she was his wife!

"I better get to work, then," Ves said. "I have spent more than enough AP to expand my storage space in the Vault of Eternity. I really need to complete those easy missions as fast as possible if I want to avoid a premature exit."

With so little AP in his account, Ves became extremely serious about completing Missions. He worked on the ones that he neglected in the past as well as the ones that he had recently accepted.

He lamented his inability to complete Missions such as 'Developing the Locos organ, as that required deep and extensive expertise in multiple fields of biotechnology as well a thorough understanding of phase lord physiology.

He had considerably less trouble with less complicated Missions related to mech design and cultivation science.

He particularly liked to spend his time on the easier Missions related to cultivation



science and E-technology.

This was his specialization. By this time, Ves had accumulated quite an eclectic collection of knowledge due to devouring numerous enlightenment fruits.

While his knowledge base was anything but comprehensive and complete, it at least gave him a basis to improvise his own solutions!

His extensive experience in designing living mechs and innovating new solutions had thoroughly allowed him to train his ability to solve a myriad of problems related to cultivation science and E-technology.

In the beginning of the Age of Dawn, hardly anyone possessed more competence in this field than him! Ves could rightfully call himself an expert in these new and esoteric disciplines!

As Ves continued to tackle one challenge after another, he became a lot more intellectually stimulated.

He reveled in the challenges and enjoyed the process of figuring out brilliant solutions to unconventional problems.

From exploring demonic cultivation to creating a controllable cultivation inheritance mechanism to benefit descendants, Ves constantly broadened his horizons and developed an interesting set of solutions.

He had no intentions of making use of most of them, but he could not help but keep a few in reserve just in case they were useful at a later date.

It didn't matter if his Mission-related works had no practical application for the time being. The journey was just as important as the destination. The more he began to solve these interesting problems, the better he became at tackling them in the most efficient manner!

It was not enough to be able to complete the Missions. Ves could only call himself a qualified mech designer if he was able to do so quickly and with as little wasted actions as possible.

The constant time pressure along with the overwhelming need to earn AP pressured him to rein in his creative instincts and make sure he stayed on topic at all times.

Ves found it difficult to maintain his focus on the job all of the time. It was his nature to let his mind wander into other areas every now and then. That was where he gained his inspiration and came up with brilliant new solutions to difficult problems.

However, his previous foray with the Deep Research Mode had given him a new appreciation of maintaining constant focus.

Even if he did not deliberately put himself in that special state of mind again, he could still imitate a small part of its charm just by making sure he imposed discipline onto his own unruly thoughts!

Ves felt as if he was undergoing another small baptism as he tested out his new approach.

Though he did not come up with any crazy new ideas, his normal problem-solving capabilities improved just enough to be able to maintain a brisk rhythm!

While Ves managed to find his groove and enter a good flow of mind, he made sure to avoid neglecting the presence of a fellow mech designer.

Compared to Ves who was readily able to work for months on end in seclusion, Ketis clearly appeared to be having trouble getting accustomed to getting cut off from her circle of family and friends.

"I miss Kirian. I miss Mayra. I miss Joshua. I miss the Swordmaidens. I miss the Heavensworders." She said as she sat down on a bench while eating a nutrient pack for lunch. "I thought I could bear the silence and monotony of working with just the two of us, but... it is much more challenging than I thought. Even when I practiced my swordsmanship until my muscles started to scream at me, I could always take comfort that my fellow sisters were always close at hand."

Ves gave her an encouraging smile while he used a spoon to scoop up the tasteless paste contained in his own nutrient pack.

A phase lord like himself could never fill his stomach with such a miniscule amount of nutrients, but he still made an effort to go through this seemingly redundant process in

order to keep Ketis company.

"This is just one of many tests that you need to endure on your journey to greatness, Ketis. How can you possibly prove yourself to be a sword god and a Star Designer when you cannot endure this temporary seclusion? It will only last half a year to a few years. Meanwhile, not a single second will pass in the main universe. Your children will remain just as young and cute as they were when you entered the System Space. The only sense of separation that exists between you and others only exists in your mind. As long as you can adjust your mindset, you will find that this is not a big deal."

Ketis remained silent even as the Heavensword feebly attempted to remind her that she had a friend on her back.

"How do you cope with this situation?" She asked.

"I don't know, I haven't done this a lot. I never really thought too much about this problem. I only focused on my goal, which is to earn a huge amount of AP so that I can redeem a handful of juicy and expensive enlightenment fruits. Perhaps that is the key to making this ordeal more bearable to you. Don't think about your suffering. Think about something pleasant like what you can get out of this. Now only will we be able to upgrade the Dimension Observatory to the point where it becomes useful, you should also have enough AP leftover to buy an excellent enlightenment fruit. This is what you truly need. Your knowledge base is still too narrow."

The swordmaster did not entirely agree with that last statement, but she was already beginning to follow his other advice.

Her eyes began to shine as she fixated her thoughts on her ambitions.

"One of the reasons why I agreed to participate in this marathon is because I see an opportunity to quickly improve my swordsmanship." She told him. "The Mission Hall conveniently offers multiple missions related to traditional swordsmanship. I enjoy the process of devising and mastering new sword techniques. I have even started to wield the Heavensword instead of the Bloodsinger."

"I have noticed." Ves said. "It is difficult to miss the elemental fluctuations from your training sessions. It is quite impressive how much E energy radiation you can draw from the environment. It reminds me of the swordsmanship demonstrated by the simulated aliens from Messier 87"

He never thought about hiding information about the strange swordsman aliens he encountered during the crazy lightning tribulation event that ultimately doomed the first Elemental Lord.

In order to pull Ketis out of her funk, Ves dredged up the first-person footage that he

stored in the depths of his cranial implant.

He activated a projection to play out the footage.

It was as if the pair of mech designers were watching an action drama. Although the stability of the footage left much to be desired, Ketis immediately grew fascinated at the techniques demonstrated by one of the four-armed alien swordsmen! No true swordmaster could ignore the attraction of viewing the techniques demonstrated by other skilled sword practitioners.

Numerous four-armed swordsmen fought by combining the power of lightning with

other elements.

The combinations opened her mind and earned her appreciation, especially now that

she had gained more skill and insight in combining swordsmanship with the elements.

She saw far more about the alien and his swordsmanship than Ves, who fought against the powerful tribulation manifestation in person.

Even the Heavensword expressed its enthusiasm for the show by rattling its scabbard in

excitement!

"Fascinating..." Ketis said. "There is actually much in common between the swordsmanship of this Messier 87 native and the swordsmanship demonstrated by the past wielders of the Heavensword. In both cases, the swordsmen always seek to amplify their techniques by borrowing the power of heaven. The strength of the former is only a fraction of the strength of the latter. You don't even need extraordinary willpower to harness so much E energy. As long as you can achieve harmony with one of the E energy attributes, I can become strong enough to crush a city even if I am wielding a human-sized sword."

Ves directed a curious expression towards his student.

"It sounds as if you are trying to become stronger by solely relying on this new form of swordsmanship."

"That is true." Ketis nodded her head. "I am well aware that I have the option to bond myself to a Carmine mech of my own design. If I combine my swordsmanship with the frame of a high-ranking mech, I can overcome the weaknesses of my frail human body. While I felt tempted to go down this path, ever since the Heavensword chose to accompany me, I don't think it is necessary for me to branch out anymore. I only need to master a form of heavenly swordsmanship and use it to upgrade my existing sword

style."

Ves did not look surprised. He didn't even feel disappointed that she explicitly rejected

his Carmine mech solution.

"Not anyone has the privilege of wielding a grand work. Many people would kill to hold the Heavensword. You can totally fight against a phase whale if you are able to effectively harness the power of this relic weapon. However... what is gifted can easily be taken away. Will you still be able to fight against the powerful enemies of red humanity if the Heavensword departs one day?"

"I... don't know, if I am being honest." Ketis slowly replied. "But I will make sure that I will

become strong enough to stand on my own. The Bloodsinger will always be my main

weapon."