

## Mech Touch 6621

### Chapter 6621 The Bringer of Carnage

Since Ves was not making much progress in convincing Ketis to drop her objection by resorting to othering, he decided to switch tracks.

He saw that he could reduce her discomfort towards using the souls of original humans as a resource if he framed it as a second chance.

"If you think about it, I am doing the folks over in the old galaxy a favor." He said with greater confidence in his voice than he actually felt. "Sure, most of them will either end up being devoured by demons, but at least they can live on in another way. They can rest easily knowing that their lives had meaning. They have made a small but meaningful contribution to the defense of fellow humans who have the misfortune of being trapped in a wartorn dwarf galaxy."

"I do not think that a cow will feel grateful or fulfilled due to the fact that his flesh is being used to fill people's bellies in a restaurant." Ketis sardonically remarked.

"Well it is better than dying a completely meaningless death." Ves insisted. "Besides, the analogy does not fit that well because humans are alien to the cow. If you believe the two branches of humanity are still part of the same group, then the dynamic is different. If a person voluntarily sacrifices himself to save another, then that is considered an act of sacrifice, which is one of the virtues that exemplify honor."

"There is a difference. Sacrifice is done by choice. I doubt that is the case with these exploited human souls." Ketis retorted.

"They wouldn't understand. They are original humans. They don't care about us anymore. Look, willing or not, you cannot deny that we are giving them a tiny chance of earning a second chance at 'life'. Demonization is not a pleasant process, but it gives them the strength and value they need to exist. If I am faced with the same situation, then I would grasp it without bothering to complain about the less-than-hospitable treatment. Even if I am reduced to a raw soul that is destined to feed a hungry demon, then I will fight for my right to live to such a massive extent that the demon will end up getting devoured by myself! Nothing is impossible as long as I am given a chance, and I think you will choose the same! Giving up is not our style!"

"...That may be true, but not everyone is like us. What if these people just want to put down their burdens and rest? What if they just want their existences to meet a graceful end?"

"Then I can only say sorry to them as I repurpose their souls so that they can still benefit the living"

Though Ves had not succeeded in converting Ketis' viewpoint, he noted that he still managed to weaken her resolve to object against his actions.

That was enough for the time being. Ves was more than willing to settle for a partial success.

"Look, we can argue all day, but I am not going to give up my strategy." He said. "Like it or not, Demoncasting has become one of the numerous solutions that we can employ to dig red humanity out of the hole. If you want to stop me from relying on it to arm our mechs with better weapons, then instead of doing something as useless as blathering on about honor, you should try and negate the need for this desperate solution."

"And how do you suggest I do that, Ves?"

"I can think of many different ways. For example, you can become a sword god and can slice the Red Cabal into pieces with the help of the Heavensword. A more realistic way you can help is by investing more AP into the Dimension Observatory. If you can earn 1500 AP and pay for the Semi-permanent Breach upgrade, you can use the Dimension Sword to create dozens of gateways into resource-filled dimensions, thereby relieving the urgent shortage of mid to high-end resources."

"Both of these goals are out of reach." Ketis complained.

"I never said it would be easy. They would have been my preferred solutions if they were more attainable than Demoncasting. At least I am doing my best to serve red humanity by fighting for our collective survival. What about you? If you want to become more than a Journeyman Mech Designer, then it is not enough for you to limit your scope of service. You need to think about how you can make a difference on a grander scale. Do you understand what you should actually do? As long as we can solve a problem with upright means, there is no need for us to resort to riskier and more problematic solutions."

"I guess you have a point..."

He successfully directed her thoughts towards herself rather than him. That was good. The more she thought about solving problems, the less prone she was to create one for Ves!

"I wonder."

"What are you wondering about, Ves?"

"I wonder what the Heavensword thinks about this. He said. "It isn't doing nothing aside from hanging behind your back. It had to be listening in to our conversation. What do you think? Do you believe I am right to favor my own people over others?"

The sheathed sword briefly glowed in white before returning to its previous condition. That was a remarkably mild reaction.

Ketis had spent enough time with the relic weapon to understand its overall thoughts and intentions.

"The Heavensword... does not feel too strongly about your actions." She reluctantly interpreted. "What I consider dishonorable is... not that big of a deal in its eyes." "You see? If the Heavensword doesn't think this is worth bothering about, then you

shouldn't either."

That provoked a heated response from the swordmaster "I am different from the Heavensword! Do not think that we are aligned to each other! I have my own thoughts and opinions! Ugh! I am getting tired of spending so much time in the System Space with you! I cannot wait to get out of this place."

He thought likewise. He did not want his Demoncasting activities to get interrupted by these unwelcome moralizing arguments.

"Okay, you are right. You are not the Heavensword. However, do not discount its opinion. It is one of the few ancient relics that has successfully withstood the test of time. It is a survivor. The heavens are fair, but also ruthless. It knows that if you want to save yourself and whatever you consider precious, then you need to do what is necessary instead of what is right. It would be great if the two are equivalent, but if not, then you need to be able to make the hard choices. The side that is more willing to do that is the side that is least constrained by its own self-imposed weaknesses."

Ves understood that there were reasons why laws, morals and ethics existed. In an ideal society, they were indeed good ways to impose restraint and keep everyone under

control.

However, he did not believe that he and other people should allow themselves to get shackled by them in a time of total war, especially against a coalition of alien species. Tying his hands behind his back when aliens were threatening to clobber him to pieces

was not honorable.

It was stupid!

Ketis slowly understood this as well, even if she was not as willing to let go of the more innocent parts of her humanity as her former mentor.

"Let's just move on." She grumbled as she took the initiative to withdraw. "You are right. Instead of wasting my time on complaining, I need to become a better swordmaster and mech designer and present better alternatives to red humanity. The people have a right to choose how they want to be saved. I will work harder than ever and hope that my solutions will ultimately convince you to return Demoncasting to its original forgotten

state."

Ves smiled at her. "I welcome the challenge. Let us compete against each other to see who can gain the upper hand."

After the two mech designers tentatively reconciled with each other, they resumed their

original activity.

They completed their examination of the Minor Demon that was trapped inside Demon

Mixer 2.

For all of his rationality, the demon was not willing to identify himself with his former human self.

He completely regarded himself as a new and different demonic personality!

"I am the Bringer of Carnage! I am the epitome of violence! I will tear all of you to shreds!"

Neither Ves nor Ketis looked amused at their only attempt to communicate with the crazy Minor Demon.

"This used to be a not-so-successful but still respectable Senior Mech Designer?"

"We can be just as emotional and aggressive as mech pilots, Ketis. We just tend to express it in different ways. Not everyone has an easy outlet for their aggression as you. While we can only wallow in our frustrations, you can channel it all out by boarding an enemy ship and hacking a bunch of aliens in half"

"At least we have a name for our demon."

The Bringer of Carnage may still be a Minor Demon, but he had grown so strong that he was only a few steps away from breaking through.

That made it worthwhile for Ves to keep the demon and find a way to stimulate his breakthrough outside of a gu container.

The Middle Demon that had become entangled with Demon Mixer 5 was another interesting case.

Despite his energy and strength deficiency, Ves could feel that he was a lot more solid

than the Bringer of Carnage.

"This guy is definitely one of the expert candidates that had the best chance of coming out on top." Ves said. "He has not disappointed my expectations and managed to vanquish over the other Minor Demons that were predominantly derived from civilian human souls. He was fairly young when he died. I estimate his age at 30 to 40 years old. He definitely died in battle. He holds a great amount of grievances about how he died too soon on the battlefield. As for his specialization... I think he used to pilot a swordsman mech equipped with two weapons. He excels at dual wielding."

"Oh? That sounds interesting."

Ketis couldn't help but develop a greater interest towards the Middle Demon. One that

was derived from a swordsman mech pilot may actually be useful in her line of work!

Of course, she still remained uncertain how powerful a D-arms could become if it

merged with this expert candidate-turned-demon.

Was it worth all of the hype?

Ves could sense her lingering doubts, so he decided to make a proposal.

"Since our time in the System Space is coming to an end, let's complete one final project.

as a celebration for all of the gains we have made."

"That will eat into our AP"

"It will be worth it." Ves insisted. "I don't want to end this marathon on a sour note. I

think that your impressions of Demoncasting are tainted by the disappointing way the Maiden Knife ended up. Let's try and produce a proper D-arms this time. We can design and forge a new mech

greatsword for the First Sword Mark III or another swordsman mech of your choosing. Then we can Demoncast it with this Middle Demon, but this time the results will be better because we have a better idea of what we are doing." Ketis did not feel as enthused about this idea as Ves, but she did not see any reason to

reject this proposal.

She was also curious about whether Ves was justified in putting so much faith into

Demoncasting.

Trying to make a proper D-arms was a good way to generate useful data that could

better inform her stance towards Demoncasting!

If the results remained poor, then Ketis had much less reason to tolerate the flagrant abuse and exploitation of so many human souls!

Chapter 6622 The Bitter Swordsman

Ves inwardly sighed with relief when Ketis agreed to cooperate on a Demoncasting project.

This time he became determined to do a serious job. He did not want to end up with a product that failed to become a powerful enough weapon and instead became more valued for its beautifying effect.

"I think the first decision we need to make is select which demon we intend to use." He said. "We only have two of them, so we can only create D-arms that fit their strengths and inclinations. We have already seen what happened if there are mismatches between the demon, the Demoncasting Mold and the object, so it would be stupid if we repeated the same mistakes."

Ketis took a look at the two restrained Demon Mixers. Both of them ended up producing two very different demons.

"There is only really one choice unless you manage to trigger the breakthrough of the Bringer of Carnage. We should settle on trying to give the only Middle Demon so far a chance to start a new life as a D-arms. Since he used to be an expert candidate that specialized in piloting duel-wielding swordsman mechs, we should design a sword around him. Maybe we can even design two swords,

though I am not sure how it will work if they are split. Will both of them retain their connection to the demon?"

"I don't know, but let's not risk it. I don't want to break this fellow by trying to split him into two objects. Let's stick to a simple job and create a single D-sword. By the way, we need to come up with a name for this demon. You are the swordmaster. Do you have any suggestions?"

The female mech designer examined Demon Mixer 5 and tried her best to get a feel for the Middle Demon's personality and convictions.

She was not as good at this as Ves, but as a swordmaster, she could still glean aspects of the expert candidate's swordsmanship beneath all of the hatred and regrets.

Compared to the Bringer of Carnage, the former expert candidate died with a lot of regrets. He perished when he was young and just starting to become a champion.

He never managed to undergo apotheosis and become a hero of his people.

He never had the fortune of having an expert mech designed just for himself.

He never had the opportunity to take his personalized machine and earn glory on the battlefield.

The expert candidate fought so hard to rise above his peers, only for him to get ambushed and torn to shreds by a ruthless enemy expert mech that did not care about fairness!

Was it the fault of the deceased for leaving himself open to get picked off by a far

superior mech and mech pilot?

The dead expert candidate did not think this was the case!

He only thought that he had died too soon because his incompetent superiors put him in the wrong place at the wrong time!



He also blamed his own bad luck because he failed to break through when he was at his most desperate!

If he was fighting on a good day, then he may actually have broken through and relied on forced resonance to retreat from his encounter with the enemy powerhouse with his life intact!

There were so many different ways this encounter could have produced a better outcome, but ultimately the expert candidate had been set up to fail.

Ketis frowned when she was able to glean all of these recriminations from the Middle Demon.

They were mostly excuses that squarely sought to shift the blame to others. The expert candidate never really reflected on his own mistakes.

The process of demonization had apparently magnified all of his grievances and negative tendencies.

They had become so overwhelmingly strong that they drowned out his honor, his dignity and his duty.

He had become a demon that possessed many of the worst traits of a soldier.

"What a contemptible demon." Ketis couldn't help but sneer. "Let us call him the Bitter Swordsman."

"Very well.

This was not the most evocative name, but it succinctly described the Middle Demon's overall demeanor and personality.

Now that they chose a demon to develop a D-arms around, the two mech designers proceeded to come up with numerous different ideas.

"Saint Dise doesn't need another sword." Ketis insisted. "She already has a good enough one in the form of the Decapitator. Perhaps we can make a demonized sword fey for the First Sword Mark III

Project instead. We can have 31 normal fey, and one that is empowered by the Bitter Demon. This will make it more challenging for Dise to control the D-arms, but the additional power will be worth it I think."

"It won't work." Ves shook his head. "The working principles of living fey are similar to Ultimate Modules in that they are both based on the 'companion spirits' of the original mech. What this means is that any fey must contain a subordinate spirit that is split away from the main living mech. If we create a D-arms that is meant to act as a fey, then it will actually turn into an unrelated spur. There will be a lack of coordination between the D-arms and the proper sword fey."

It may still be worthwhile to pursue this idea in the hopes of creating a powerful secondary weapon, but neither Ves nor Ketis believed it was necessary. "Forget about it, then." Ketis said. "The First Sword Mark III Project is already perfect enough as it is. Changing her configuration to accommodate D-arms will only introduce more risks and uncertainties. We should give Saint Dise time to make use of her new ace mech and corresponding arsenal. If she thinks that there are any shortcomings in her weapons loadout, I can make additional weapons later, though they may not necessarily be D-arms. Saint Dise has never been a mech pilot who relies on others to win her

fight."

They began to turn their attention elsewhere.

The D-arms based around the Bitter Demon had to be designed for a specific target in order for them to find a direction to work towards.

Perhaps they could forgo this step and craft a generic D-arms, but that made it a challenge to pair it up with a fitting mech and mech pilot.

It was much better to design the weapon around a specific pilot from the onset.

After considering a number of different candidates, the two eventually narrowed down their selection to three possible recipients.

Ves listed out the most choices. "The Dark Zephyr, the Bastion or the Everchanger are all decent choices. They make use of bladed weapons and they can use an upgrade on this front. Which one do we remove from consideration first?"

"The Dark Zephyr." Ketis said. "For now, Tusa is doing great with the tier 3 Destroyer spear. Also, I doubt that a D-arms possessed by a rather weak Middle Demon can provide much of an upgrade to an ace pilot. Perhaps the Bitter Demon may be able to grow quickly once he is given time to grow, Tusa can't wait that long. It is much better to give these D-arms to a high-tier expert pilot. The resistance generated by the Bitter Demon may even cause the pilot to develop his willpower and become more assertive." "You know what? Why don't we develop a D-sword for Venerable Joshua and the Everchanger?" Ves suggested. "When you initially analyzed Joshua's shortcomings as an expert pilot, you said that all of his scores were low. A good D-sword may be able to help him grow in all three areas. His Heaven score can be pulled up by encouraging Joshua to comprehend the concept of symbiosis by establishing cooperation with a hostile and unwilling demon. His Earth score can be raised by equipping his Everchanger with a materially and qualitatively superior weapon than the Heartsword. His Man score can be bolstered by making him hold his ground against the Bitter Demon. This will be a D-arms that can give Joshua the challenge that he needs to overcome the weaknesses and insecurities that hold him back all of this time."

Ves spontaneously managed to come up with a proposal that sounded logical and appropriate.

He cleverly applied Ketis' new paradigm in his analysis, making it difficult for the swordmaster to refute his claims.

He even managed to make it sound as if Demoncasting was far more beneficial in solving Venerable Joshua's problem than other solutions!

In fact, the proper way to increase Venerable Joshua's breakthrough chances was to update his outdated expert mech, but that would take way too long. Compared to waiting for approximately two years for Ves and Gloriana to complete the Everchanger Mark III Project, it was much faster and more convenient to invest a few days in designing and forging a mech sword that could turn into a powerful D-arms! Ketis definitely had a vested interest in seeing her husband succeed. She felt rather disappointed with him as of late.

If he was able to grow from the experience of handling a powerful but unruly D-arms and successfully attain his sainthood, then he would definitely regain his pride and self-respect as a champion!

Since they were designing a new weapon for her husband's expert mech, Ketis immediately grew a lot more invested in this project!

"We need to make use of the best first-class materials that we can get our hands upon.

The D-arms need to be tough and powerful enough to accompany Joshua for many years." She decided. "We can't obtain enough high-quality materials from the Divine Bazaar without wiping out our Ascension Points, so we need to exit the System Space and obtain resources through our own means."

Ves nodded. "I agree. There is always a stock of first-class materials in Diandi Base. There are plenty of leftover spare materials that we prepared for the fabrication of the Dark Zephyr Mark III, the Amaranto Mark III and so on. I can also spend MTA credits and MTA merits to purchase additional hypers and exotics."

"When I exit the System Space, I will browse the War Exchange and encourage Joshua to

spend some of his war merits to obtain a batch of strategic materials that are difficult to obtain through other channels." Ketis suggested.

A good sword began with choosing the right materials. The better the selection, the

easier it was to create stronger and more helpful arms.

It was still possible to make do with cheaper and more standard materials. The Demoncasting process naturally transformed and strengthened the physical properties of the resulting D-arms.

However, starting out with more premium materials meant that the subsequent amplification would elevate the D-arms to a much higher level than the old Heartsword!

Both Ves and Ketis referenced a few databases and made a few initial selections on

which hypers and exotics they intended to utilize.

Ves possessed greater expertise in hyper materials and selected a handful that had a

strong affinity towards the life E energy attribute.

Ketis knew what kind of exotics could be used to forge a sharp and sturdy mech sword of the style she had in mind. She immediately set her sights on a few expensive transphasic alloys.

"Now, we need to combine these materials in a sword design that draws out their strengths and matches Joshua's future swordsmanship."

"Future swordsmanship?"

"I had 9 months to think about how to devise a sword style rooted in the School of

Reformed Swordsmanship." Ketis said. "My husband is much more receptive to improving his ability to fight with a sword than before. Getting humiliated by the Teenage Swordswoman back then has given him a harsh dose of reality. He will learn how to hold his ground against such an adversary next time."

The native aliens were ready to ramp up their offensive at any time. Ketis urgently

wanted Joshua to become stronger so that he could stand a better chance of surviving the storm that was about to sweep across human-occupied space.

A good sword had the potential to raise all of Joshua's scores and bring him closer to surpassing the crucial threshold!

Chapter 6623 Charged Weapon Concept

Ves and Ketis finally exited the System Space, but not to return to their old routines, but rather gather the necessary materials for their collaboration project.

It must have been weird for the people around them to notice that Ves and Ketis abruptly changed their demeanors.

They had worked continuously for 9 months. It was natural for them to come out with completely different attitudes and mindsets.

They could not hide the weariness radiating from their expressions and body language, but they were able to mask it to a degree by focusing on their current priority.

Soon enough, they used their contacts and spent their money and merits to quickly secure a batch of materials that they could use to forge the Bittersword.

They ordered a greater variety of materials than needed in order to retain a bit of flexibility and choice.

The two had yet to design the new weapon, so it was best to be safe and build up a generous stockpile.

Ves intended to craft a lot more D-arms in the future. He could use anything left untouched in his future Demoncasting projects.

Now that they gathered an abundant amount of phasewater, exotics and hypers, they obtained all of the building blocks they need to design a good D-arm.

They soon stumbled upon an immediate problem.

"We can't control the final form of the D-sword." Ves said. "Whatever we design, the appearance as well as the performance of the weapon will undergo a comprehensive transformation after we Demoncast it. While the weapon is bound to become stronger, it will also spend its energies on useless additions and elements that pose a greater threat to the wielder. Anything can happen, which is what makes Demoncasting so interesting. If our luck is bad, then a lot more energy will be spent on detrimental changes. If our luck is a little better, then the changes will mostly be helpful and productive. We only have a single attempt, though. We cannot impose strong enough control over the process with our current understanding and mastery of Demoncasting." Even if they accrued a lot more experience and learned a lot more how Demoncasting changed an object, Ves doubted that the situation would be much better.

They could control the variables before Demoncasting in an attempt to guide the process within a specific range of outcomes, but that was like training a cat to spy on

enemies.

"You're right." Ketis said as she furrowed her brows. "There are many variables that go into forging a good sword. A weapon as high-end as a first-class transphasic hyper mech sword has to meet high criteria in order to avoid misusing all of the phasewater and

other expensive materials. If the regular Demoncasting process is similar to the transformation of the Maiden Knife, then I fear what may happen to our potential masterwork. The influence of the Bitter Swordsman on the weapon will be completely out of our control. We do not have a good idea of the principles and patterns of the transformation, so the sword can grow serrated teeth or maybe even turn into a trident." The awareness that the final outcome would ultimately look far different from their initial design made it difficult for the two mech designers to start their work.

They were accustomed to having as many variables under their control as possible. Even if they could not account for slight variations in material, quality and so on, at least their end products were near-perfect matches of their designs!

In a reality where the deviation between a mech design and a fabricated mech was normally below 0.01 percent, a variation as large as 30 percent or more was a catastrophe!

Even Ves, who fell in love with Demoncasting and liked the surprises troubled on how to approach the current project.

could offer, felt

However, he eventually shook his head and decided to soldier on even if the circumstances were anything but ideal.

"It is useless to cry about factors that we can't control. We should just design the best. possible sword based on the materials we have gathered for the Everchanger. I know that once we Demoncast the Bitter Swordsman into the weapon, everything will change, but at least we have done the best we can by providing a good base. Think of it as raising a designer baby. We can decide on the genes and augmentation package in advance, but once the embryo is synthesized and eventually gets born, our ability to control the properties of the growing child progressively drops over time."

This was not a perfect analogy, but it was enough to convince Ketis that she could still work under the circumstances.

He was right. The initial form of the weapon might not resemble the final form, but at least there was a strong degree of correlation between the two. A normal sword was unlikely to transform into a spear after it got Demoncasted.

The two soon began to design the initial form of the sword.

Even if it wouldn't remain in this form for long after forging it, Ketis still intended to make it fit Venerable Joshua and the Everchanger as best as possible.

She possessed a thorough understanding of the expert pilot and his expert mech, so she did not need to collect additional data to create a vision of a new weapon. "The Everchanger currently has access to two swords." Ketis explained. "The Heartsword is an old and reliable weapon, but it is sadly outdated even if I have maintained it and applied minor upgrades to it over the years. Designed in the style of an arming sword, the Heartsword is a handy and reliable weapon that fits well in the hands of the Everchanger. Joshua doesn't make use of it as often as before, though. Its offensive

potential is lacking. The only good thing I have to say about it is that Joshua is able to rely upon it at all times. He has trained and fought with it for many hours and knows it like the back of his hand."

"And the Scarlet Ember?"

"I never really considered it a part of the Everchanger's permanent arsenal." Ketis admitted. "We stole the plasma sword from the Neo Amadeus and repurposed it into an alternative weapon for the Everchanger. Since it was originally designed to be wielded by an ace mech, the Everchanger cannot keep it active for long without draining his energy reserves. I have mitigated this problem by upgrading the Everchanger's energy cells, but it is still too powerful for the expert hero mech. I also think it is a poor fit for this particular machine. It should be wielded by a mech that is designed from the ground up to wield high-intensity energy swords."

The swordmaster never developed a liking for plasma swords and other energy-type

swords.

They relied a lot more on technology rather than solid alloy to form the blade. Wielding them also required a radically different approach and set of sword skills.



Joshua only ever really used it if his Everchanger needed to inflict high damage up close and did not mind if he expended a lot of energy in the process.

In any case, it was clear to hear from Ketis' tone that she wanted to decouple the Scarlet Ember from the Everchanger.

"I think we can design a proper replacement for the Scarlet Ember, Ves suggested. "The Heartsword should be reserved for general usage. Maybe you can upgrade it later on to strengthen its alignment towards the metal element or another E energy attribute. As for the D-arms, I think we can rely on the power of the Bitter Swordsman to give the weapon a more damaging edge, especially if we make use of the right Demoncasting

Mold."

The two came closer to figuring out what kind of sword they wanted to equip the Everchanger.

Ves and Ketis both took the current and future state of the expert hero mech into account when devising the new D-arm.

It had to be usable by the Everchanger Mark II while also keeping up with the vastly improved performance of the upcoming Everchanger Mark III!

The two kept drafting several proposals and considering their design choices for their collaborative project.

"Do you want to integrate stormblade technology into the D-arm?" Ves asked. "No." Ketis immediately shook her head in refusal. "Stormblade technology can be a boon for Joshua, but we are not designing this D-arm to increase the Everchanger's combat power. We are also trying to promote the growth and evolution of my husband. I fear that if I bestow his expert mech with an electrified D-arm, he will learn the wrong

lessons from it and develop an unnecessary affinity for electric power. We need to design a sword that is conducive to promoting the power of cooperation and symbiosis." Ves gained a good idea. "Why not make a sword that you can precharge with energy or another special resource and have it discharge it over use? The weapon will be far more effective when it still retains a charge. Once the Everchanger has exhausted it, the mech can return it to its sheath and go back to using the Heartsword. This way, Joshua still has a reason to use both weapons."

Ketis liked the sound of that. Even though the Heartsword truly needed a comprehensive upgrade, she did not want her husband to phase out the weapon

entirely.

Adopting Ves' suggestion pretty much meant replacing the Scarlet Ember. The two weapons occupied the same role, though the D-sword would hopefully rely on a sharp physical edge instead of a burning plasma edge to inflict damage!

The next major decision they needed to make was what kind of resource they would rely upon to give the weapon a high but temporary boost of damage.

Plasma was out of the picture. They would just be recreating a different version of the

Scarlet Ember if they selected this option.

"What about phasewater?" Ves made another suggestion. "Now that our clan has become more successful in battle, we can always harvest a steady amount of phasewater from the spoils we gain from the battlefield. Our income is much greater these days and we have gained access to so many high-end trading channels that it is very possible for us to buy additional phasewater from our closest friends and allies. We can design a weapon that exemplifies a transphasic sword."

"Are you suggesting that we try to develop a superdimensional weapon of our own?"

"That's beyond our capabilities, Ketis. I don't know how the native aliens and the cosmopolitans have managed to make those Saint Piercer arms, but there are rumors that they are made with the help of ancient phase whales. I don't think we can replicate their incredible power and mastery of spatial abilities, but we don't have to. D-arms rely on different principles to become more powerful. What I want is to make a phasewater-charged sword that is specifically designed to tear through transphasic energy shields and spatial barriers as if they are paper. This must be a weapon that is specifically designed to counter phase lords."

This was a weapon that the Everchanger needed the most in the current day and age. The Heartsword and the Scarlet Ember were both fine weapons, but neither performed well against transphasic energy shields or azure energy shields. This was a major shortcoming that only became more severe in the future.

The future Everchanger Mark III update would definitely address all of these shortcomings, but for now the phasewater-charged sword concept sounded like an excellent stopgap solution!

"Joshua will like it." Ketis predicted. "He has always felt that his Everchanger is lacking in offensive power compared to the other expert mechs of our clan. With a more powerful sword, it will become much easier for him to regain his relevance and make him feel as if he is making much greater contributions than before. We should make sure to set a quota on how much phasewater he is allowed to use, though. He will probably burn through our entire stock within a month or two if he is allowed to make use of his new weapon at will."

#### Chapter 6624 Weapons That Can Threaten Gods

Phasewater-charged weapons were not new.

The native aliens developed many different weapons that expended phasewater to temporarily increase a weapon's penetration power.

However, it was impossible for them to apply this tech on a large scale. Phasewater may be more abundant in alien space, but it was still a precious resource that had a lot of different uses!

In truth, there were more nefarious reasons why this known technology had not become as popular as it should.

Phasewater-charged weapons boasted enhanced lethality and could neutralize phasewater-based defenses a lot more effectively than usual.

This made them a lot more threatening when employed against phase lords and phase whales!

As the gods and rulers of the Red Ocean, these phase leaders would never allow their mortal subjects to build up a stockpile of weapons that could end their reign one day! Given that the phase whales had always been regarded as gods for millions of years in the dwarf galaxy, their policies to restrict the other alien races from investing in the development of phasewater-charged weapons and building enormous stockpiles of them had apparently been successful!

Plenty of human analysts and researchers speculated that the true reason why the phase whale race taught the other major races how to turn themselves into phase lords was to prevent them from developing phasewater-charged weapons!

By giving the ruling class of the nunser race, the puelmer race, the jureg race and so on the ability to drastically expand their lifespans and gain nearly unmatched personal power, their interests suddenly became a lot more aligned with the phase whale race! If this was true, then this was a particularly clever and subversive way of preventing a catastrophic rebellion by preemptively absorbing the leaders of every significant race! Ever since this status quo came into being, the native gods that reigned over much of alien society in the Red Ocean maintained a careful watch of technological development in their respective regions.

The local gods made sure to suppress any attempt to invest in the R&D and production of powerful phasewater-charged weapons because such arms not only threatened the phase whale race, but also their own oversized true bodies!

So far, phasewater-charged weapons had yet to be used in a significant capacity by both sides.

The native alien forces primarily consisted of cannon fodder fleets. They were thrown onto red humanity's frontlines with the expectation that they would die in exchange for

weakening the human defenders.

It did not make sense to equip them with phasewater-charged weapons. Not only would human high-ranking mechs focus on eliminating them first, but the native aliens could achieve the same results by relying on quantity over quality as long as they showed a little more patience.

The red humans did not employ phasewater-charged weapons on a wide scale either. Their supply of it was much less, so they had to make the most out of the limited quantities they had available by putting them to use in more sustainable tech. Only certain battleships and ace mechs had the privilege of making use of phasewater-charged weapons, but even then their use was heavily restricted.

Red humanity had already begun to produce more of them in haste in case they were confronted by a sudden phase of phase lords and phase whales.

Since the native gods had become such an overwhelming concern to red humanity, Ves and Ketis found it prudent to ensure that their clan could deal against this threat as well. "We can't issue phasewater-charged weapons to all of our champions." Ves told Ketis. "They can burn through hundreds of grams or even more than a kilogram's worth of phasewater with every encounter. Their

usage may be justified if they managed to kill a phase lord and earn a huge share of all of the phasewater and phasewater organs that can be salvaged from the enormous corpse, but I don't think that will happen often enough. If we have to resupply all of the phasewater expended by more than a dozen expert mechs and ace mechs, we will quickly drain our reserves and enter into a deficit!" His words conveyed an underlying message that Ketis keenly understood. "Venerable Joshua shall become a worthy bearer of the only phasewater-charged weapon of our clan." She promised to him. "The Everchanger is the most suitable machine to wield such an expensive sword. The Dark Zephyr Mark III does not need it because he can leap past every energy barrier. The Bastion does not need it because she is not mobile enough to make good use of the blade. The only other mechs that may be able to make good use of it are the Lionheart and the Blood Star Mark II."

A stronger case could be made for those two machines. They were already high-tier expert mechs piloted by trueblood Larkinsons that were only one step away from breaking through.

General Ark Larkinson may have fallen behind compared to Saint Tusa Billingsley-Larkinson, but he was still a very skilled mech pilot and mech commander. Giving him a phasewater-charged weapon was like adding wings to a tiger.

As for his grandfather, Venerable Benjamin Larkinson had mostly recovered from his decades of indolence and lack of training. His physical state was still frail compared to other expert pilots, so he probably needed a little more help in order to surpass the critical threshold and advance to the next rank.

If Benjamin managed to become an ace pilot, his Saint Kingdom would be able to fortify and rejuvenate his body even further, thereby prolonging his lifespan and counteracting the physical effects of aging and other ailments!

However, Ves did not think that either of them needed a phasewater-charged weapon. Their mechs were much more modern and powerful, so they were already capable of putting up a good fight without a stronger sword.

The Everchanger on the other hand needed this boon the most. It was much older than the other two expert mechs. It was designed before phasewater technology became more widely available, so it was very much lacking in its ability to counteract transphasic defenses.

Arming it with this special D-sword would therefore make the greatest difference on the battlefield!

Ves inclined his head towards Ketis. "Make sure that Joshua does not squander this gift. Let's begin to design the weapon."

Now that they had made the critical design choices, they had a clear idea on the weapon they wished to design.

Given that the D-sword would primarily be used to fight against massive phase lords, it had to be long, broad and relatively thick along the center.

It needed to be able to cut through as much of the true body of a phase lord as possible! However, as a hero mech, the Everchanger should ideally wield its sword in a single

hand.

This limited the mass and dimensions of the weapon. They couldn't make a weapon as long and heavy as a greatsword because that would make it too easy for the enemy to

knock it out of the Everchanger's grip!

While the Everchanger could theoretically wield a greatsword with two arms, this was not ideal as one of the arms was optimized to wield a rifle with a single hand. The limb was not designed to swing large and heavy objects with great force!

"Joshua doesn't like to fight with greatswords anyway." Ketis mentioned. "He thinks they are too clumsy in unskilled hands. It is too easy to punish a wielder if he or she makes a

mistakes.

"So what type of sword do you recommend for this project?"

"Either a longsword or a thick and heavy scimitar. The former is more familiar to Joshua, but personally I recommend a scimitar. The best way to deal damage against a phase lord is by cutting, not stabbing. Wielding a curved blade will make it easier. Straight-edged swords are actually more effective when used against other mechs due to the need to pierce deep through multiple armor layers and inflict crippling damage onto the internals."

"I see. Will Joshua be able to learn how to wield this weapon?"

"Sure. I will teach him in person, and I will also make sure to embed sword style lessons into the weapon itself. Hopefully, the Demoncasting process will not compromise them too much. In fact, I am rather curious how the Bitter Swordsman might corrupt my

work,"

"Alright. The Bitter Scimitar Project it is, then. Let us make sure that we design it so that it matches all of the related parties as best as possible."

Their design work began in earnest. Ves and Ketis both worked on different aspects of the weapon.

Ketis was in charge of the project due to her greater expertise on bladed weapons. She primarily concerned herself with the metallurgy, the shape and the mass distribution of

the scimitar.

Ves meanwhile worked on the more technological aspects of the future D-weapon. He relied on his broader and more extensive knowledge base to handle the phasewater technology, the hyper technology and most of the E-technology aspects of the Biter

Scimitar Project.

That meant that he also took responsibility for implementing the components that made it possible to augment the cutting edge by burning phasewater.

His unfamiliarity with the specialized tech slowed him down a bit, but not too much. He

was more than capable of familiarizing with it quickly due to the fact that he was a phase lord as well as a Senior Mech Designer.

While he only replicated the current tech and did not do anything to innovate on the current solution, that was already enough as far as he was concerned.

He wanted to make sure that the implementation phasewater-charged technology was as solid and reliable as possible. It needed to serve as a strong base for subsequent

demonization.

Once the Bitter Swordsman got Demoncasted into the Bitter Scimitar Project, he would most definitely mutate and empower this tech far beyond its initial specifications! The two mech designers became increasingly more excited in the project as they progressed their work.

The more details got added into the design, the more their imagination conjured up images of how it would look and perform after it got Demoncasted.

The growing anticipation raised their motivation and caused them to make brisk

progress.

It only took a few days to complete the design for the entire weapon. The scimitar had

grown fairly thick and long, but the Everchanger should still be able to wield it

adequately enough.

The Bitter Scimitar could be used in two different ways.

When remained in an unpowered state, its cutting edge should not be that much

different from any other transphasic sword, barring any effects brought by

Demoncasting.

Yet when the weapon finally began to burn phasewater, its edge would begin to acquire



properties that reminded Ves of superdimensional properties, but only for a short amount of time!

"According to my calculations, if the Bitter Scimitar burns through 100 grams of

phasewater, its penetration power will increase by 500 to 700 percent over a span of 16-25 seconds." Ves said. "I can't be more precise than that as there are many variables that can influence the effectiveness of phasewater-charged technology. Mind you, the numbers that I have mentioned only apply to its un-demonized state. Once it is turned into a D-arm, I expect the figures to undergo drastic changes."

Ketis nodded in understanding. "16 to 25 seconds is awfully short. It is not enough to kill or cripple a phase lord, but it should be enough to overload the enemy's energy defenses. If 100 grams of phasewater is not enough, then the scimitar should burn 200

grams. If 200 grams is not enough, then 400 grams!" Talk like that often led to sky-high consumption and sudden bankruptcies! However, the effect should be worth it so long as the Everchanger could ensure a kill

when employing the Bitter Scimitar,

Taking out an enemy phase lord not only yielded massive spoils, but also eased the

pressure on the border regions, thereby making it a little more likely for red humanity to

withstand the onslaught!

"The Everchanger will become true hero mech after obtaining this D-arm." Ves grinned

in expectation.

## Chapter 6625 The Challenges of First-Class Weapon Production

After completing the design for the Bitter Scimitar, Ves and Ketis immediately prepared to forge the weapon.

They planned to utilize the excellent facilities of the Workshop of Creation to make this happen.

Though Ketis was relatively new to the Mech Designer System, she had already made use of the equipment multiple times throughout the marathon. By completing several Missions related to production, the swordmaster gradually became familiar with the high-end equipment and tools.

Ves and Ketis had no idea who developed all of these instruments and tools. Whoever was responsible certainly knew their business. Any mech designer, engineer or craftsman could configure them exactly to their liking. Much of the equipment offered a high degree of control over their operations.

The excessive amount of control parameters could easily overwhelm a less knowledgeable and experienced creator, but those of a higher level could easily leverage extra options to finetune their work processes and increase the quality and consistency of their output!

As a swordmaster and a Journeyman Mech Designer, Ketis also happened to minor in traditional blacksmithing, or rather the sword making part of it. Her heritage was relatively basic, but Ves had supplied her with enough documentation and manuals to forge a minor artifact by herself.

"It is important that we create the Bitter Artifact in the form of a minor artifact. It would be better if we can elevate it to a masterwork as well." Ves explained to Ketis. "From what I have learned about Demoncasting, it is much easier to merge a demon into an object if it is already set up to host an artifact spirit. Less energy will be wasted on opening up space. It will also decrease the severity of unproductive mutations. They tend to occur when the demon is forced to mash himself into an object that is inherently unsuited to accommodate his presence."

The female mech designer raised her eyebrow. "How did you manage to learn all of that? Did you exchange an enlightenment fruit without my notice?"

"I pieced the clues together by studying the Demoncasting Forge, analyzing the data on the Maiden Knife and reviewing my prior understanding on artifacts and creation cultivation. It is all connected, you see." Ves confidently smiled at her. "From my understanding, Demoncasting will produce much better results if we pave the way as much as possible. The process will follow the path of least resistance. Think of it like this. If we dig up a channel where water can flow through a route that we have optimized in advance, the Bitter Swordsman will more likely than not obediently follow our arrangements rather than expend additional energy into digging his own channel." That analogy allowed Ketis to understand the gist of his explanation,

"I see. If that is the case, we should ideally create a high-level artifact, as that is the closest to matching the properties of a D-arm. Creating a masterwork should suffice. The newly birthed artifact spirit will start off so weak and without any personality that I will not feel bad if it gets subsumed by the Bitter Swordsman."

Technically speaking, this was like birthing a baby in the form of a sword artifact, only to allow a demon to possess and assimilate the infant's body and soul!

If Ves literally attempted to do this to a human baby, then Ketis would never stand for it. A purpose-built mech weapon was a different case, however. She could still tolerate this treatment because she did not truly treat a newly forged artifact as a true living being. In any case, Ves and Ketis had a clear idea on how they should approach this forging run. Ketis naturally took the lead. She had already forged a masterwork mech sword in the form of the Decapitator in the past.

She accumulated a lot more knowledge and experience since then, but she had only worked on the design of the Bitter Scimitar for a short amount of time.

The use of more powerful materials made it more challenging to combine them into a sword as they were more energetic in general. This meant that they were prone to releasing unexpected bursts of energy and might even produce strange reactions when they came into contact with other volatile materials.

This made it important for her to understand the properties of all of the hypers and exotics and anticipate how they would react if they were put together during the forging process.

Exposure to heat, pressure, liquids and so on could all set off the materials before they were combined into stable alloys.

The inclusion of phasewater alone added another dimension of difficulty to the forging process. Until it was fully integrated into the metal alloys, it would definitely generate a lot of unstable and disruptive spatial activity around it. The higher the concentration of phasewater, the greater the difficulty of containing the reactions!

Fortunately, the Workshop of Creation also included advanced devices that could suppress the spatial activity.

The downside was that they couldn't remain active at all times because a few steps of the production process partially relied on these spatial shenanigans to combine incompatible materials together in a much more powerful alloy!

Ketis actually struggled to understand and plan how to safely handle and utilize every high-end material.

If she erred on the side of caution, she would not be able to combine the materials as well as they should, thereby causing the resulting alloys and end product to fail to live up to their potential.

If she tried to push too close to the limit and beyond, then she was liable to create an accident, thereby ruining the entire forging attempt!

"I have more respect for first-class mech designers and craftsmen now." She commented. "They have to understand a lot more advanced theories in metallurgy and materials science just to figure out how to prevent their own workshop from blowing up. It is so easy to produce an accidental bomb by mixing different volatile materials

together."

Ves nodded. "Creating first-class artifacts is not easy. The threshold is much higher, but that makes it all the more satisfying if you can do it. It is okay if you are not adept with handling these high-end materials. I can handle it in your stead. My external incarnation Vulcan is familiar with most of the exotics and hypers that we have included in the design. I can also use my own foundation in craftsmanship to figure out how to handle the unfamiliar materials. I am more concerned about fabricating and putting together the components for the phasewater-charged tech. These are purely technological components that have to be fabricated with more modern processes. Making them fit seamlessly with the forged scimitar will be another challenge."

All of this made it more difficult to turn the weapon into a masterwork.

Even so, their chances of success were not small.

Ves was an experienced masterwork mech designer and had developed his own style to an extensive degree over the course of many past projects. Vulcan was also able to provide increasingly better assistance, especially if the work had any relations to

traditional craftsmanship.

Ketis knew swords like no one else in the Larkinson Clan. She attained well-developed masteries in both the production and use of the sword. It was already rare enough to find a single human individual who possessed one such mastery. To be so proficient in both areas at the same time was much rarer and much more precious as a result! Aside from that, Ketis was much more invested in this forging run.

Ves only wanted to make a proper D-arm in order to validate his assumptions about Demoncasting.

The swordmaster on the other hand wanted to gift her husband an excellent sword that could increase his performance on the battlefield and restore his confidence!

After revising, optimizing and double-checking their plan one last time, the two finally decided to proceed with forging the base artifact for the Demoncasting attempt.

"Let us begin."

The Workshop of Creation became busy with activity as both mech designers began to work with a focused mindset.

Ves had offered to bonk Ketis' head with his Hammer of Brilliance, but she instantly declined.

"No thanks, Ves. I have a clear idea of what I want to do this time. I do not want to get assaulted by random inspiration and make radical changes on the spot. I don't want to innovate any further. I just want to produce the most solid result."

"Then at least enter into a two-person design network with me. We can keep tabs on

each other's work a lot better."

"Alright."

"Mrow."

Alexandria was much more adept at this, but Blinky possessed the capacity to form a design network as well.

As the two became connected in mind, they were able to ensure that they both remained up to date if they encountered any deviations from the plan.

Such incidents happened more often than not. The two may have made a lot of hasty preparations in advance, but the lack of time invested in the project and their lack of real experience in handling much of the volatile materials inevitably led to faults and slight deviations that exceeded the set tolerance levels.

Gloriana would have torn her hair out if she witnessed such mistakes. She would have disqualified the component and started all over again until the work was within her exacting tolerances.

Ves on the other hand maintained a more adaptive mindset and just decided to roll with the changes. Minor deviations and accidents were of little concern to him as long as they did not compromise the performance of the end product to a significant degree.

He instead felt that they added a touch of color and personality to the product. From his perspective, every handmade product had to attain its own unique identity in order to become a masterwork.

Through controlled chaos, Ves converted any deviations into traits that added character to the end product.

The essence of his crafting style was to transform negative factors into positive factors whenever possible.

He was not always able to do this all of the time. Part of the challenge in making the

Bitter Scimitar was to judge whether to keep a faulty component or discard

again.

and try

When Ves paid attention to Ketis' approach towards her work, he noted that she was still in the process of developing and maturing her own production style.

So far, her approach towards forging the Bitter Scimitar leaned closer to Ves rather than

Gloriana.

Through the design network, Ves found out that Ketis valued heart and intention over technical accuracy.

She was able to tolerate unplanned deviations from the designs so long as her strong

instincts and her emotions agreed with the changes.

An additional unexpected factor that influenced her work was the Heavensword.

The weapon did not actively advise Ketis or take action if she made any mistakes.

It instead generated a soft aura that helped to increase her focus and clear a few distractions from her mind.

The effect was not as drastic as entering into a real or false inspired state, but it was enough for the swordmaster.

She was better able to set aside her fears, her concerns and other distractions. The Journeyman Mech Designer also felt more in tune with swords and other bladed

weapons.

She practically felt the scimitar slowly coming to life. With every action she took, she

increasingly shaped and defined the weapon on a physical as well as metaphysical level. When they moved on to the final phases where they assembled the technological parts

into the forged blade and hilt, the two mech designers finally took a step back and beheld their latest creation.

"It's a masterwork." Ketis said with a tired but relieved breath. "Now we just need to Demoncast it. I wonder if the Bitter Scimitar will retain anything of its transcendent quality."

"It should... I think. Actually, I am not sure. Even if it stops being a masterwork, a D-arm should be superior since it is much stronger on many levels."

Chapter 6626 Ves the Demon Provocateur

Masterworks could differ enormously from each other.

Each of them represented excellence in material production in one fashion or another, but there was never a single correct outcome.

That was inherently anathema to the traditional craftsmanship community.

Different professionals could never completely agree on what constituted a good work.

For example, Gloriana highly valued technical consistency and perfection. The closer a mech resembled the ideal mech design, the more exquisite the result!

Ves on the other hand thought that such an overly sterile and standard outcome was too boring to earn a good score. What other people considered flaws, he tended to view them as colorful personality traits.



Their diverging standards were reflective of their design philosophies.

It was impossible for Gloriana to come around and appreciate Ves' tolerance towards chaos and imperfections.

Likewise, Ves could never bring himself to evaluate Gloriana's bland and flawless work highly.

Despite their fundamental differences in philosophy and opinion, the two were nonetheless able to work well together.

They did not have to agree with each other on every matter in order to produce a masterwork. It was enough to understand their differences. So long as they amicably agreed to work around each other, they could avoid stepping on each other's toes while focusing on completing the assignments that fit their inclinations the best.

Unlike the previous masterwork mechs that Ves had fabricated alongside Gloriana, the Bitter Scimitar was much more reflective of his own style.

Ketis' own approach towards craftsmanship and sword forging only added a different accent to the result.

The fact that Ves managed to succeed further validated his own quirky approach towards craftsmanship.

Controlled chaos was not a fantasy that led to a dead end. The more proficient he became in adopting this strategy, the more he was able to craft increasingly higher quality works despite the retention of so many physical 'imperfections'!

After the pair of mech designers scanned the newly created masterwork and wrote down their notes of their observations and experiences, they were finally ready to begin the final and most crucial process.

Confidence coursed through Ves' body as he beheld the Bitter Scimitar and the Demon Mixer that contained the Bitter Swordsman.

"We have prepared the ingredients as best as possible. Our second attempt will be a lot better. I can assure you of that. Almost everything is ready."

"Almost? What are we missing?"

"I need to have a good talk with the former expert candidate." Ves replied as he approached a certain demimech. "If I can influence the process of demonization by bargaining with the demon, then it doesn't hurt to try. Who knows whether this will make the final form of the Bitter Scimitar more effective than before."

Ves closed in on the Demon Mixer and pressed his palm on its demonized surface. "Hello there. I know you can hear me somehow. Let's talk."

If the demimech was not being restrained at the moment, it would have attempted to squash Ves even though it stood no chance of inflicting any actual damage!

Perhaps the Bitter Swordsman may have gained a bit of rationality due to an uncertain factor, but it had not shaken off its fundamental nature as a demon!

Ves immediately knew that he could not reason with the Bitter Swordsman like a normal human being. He immediately decided to switch his strategy and adopt a firmer demeanor.

"Fine, then. If you want to be like this, then let me make my point clear in terms you understand. You are a loser. There, I said it. You were a pathetic mech pilot in life. You managed to promote to the rank of expert candidate, yet got butchered like a pig on the battlefield due to overestimating your abilities. Qualified expert pilots have been able to survive their vulnerable periods as expert candidates without issue, but you have failed to measure up to that standard, so you deserve to die a worthless early death."

The Demon Mixer began to shake more violently against the restraints!

The provocative words infuriated the demon!

Ves smirked as he continued to feel the mounting anger and fury inside the machine.

"So what if you're pissed? You can't do anything as long as you are attached to this useless demimech. Did you know I purposefully designed it so that you would still amount to little more than a nuisance when you demonized it? Heh. You must be feeling endlessly frustrated. You were a loser in your first life, and now you are a loser in your second life. Do you like feeling so powerless? Are you content with remaining a loser despite the fact that you have grown stronger than before?"

"..."

"I thought so. All I am offering is a solution for you. As long as you cooperate with me and allow yourself to undergo a transformation that will help you integrate with that powerful mech scimitar over there, your new home will subsequently be transferred to a high-tier expert mech. For once in your life, you will be able to redeem yourself and prove your worth in a battle against powerful and relentless aliens. If you happen to establish a closer form of cooperation with the expert pilot, he may even be able to advance to the rank of ace pilot. Your proximity and assistance will allow you to earn a share of the rewards. You will gain so much high-quality energy that you can become a lot stronger than you could ever imagine back when you were an expert candidate."

"..."

"Do not think that it is pointless for you to fight on behalf of your new wielder. The more you assist your new owner, the stronger you will become. He will welcome that, as a stronger blade will allow him to challenge stronger opponents. Isn't this a good way for you to attain the glory and success that your enemies denied you in your first life?"

"...!"

"Okay, that's fair. No mech pilot wants to be reduced to an enslaved tool if he can help it. You don't have any choice, though. You died, and this is your new afterlife. You have become damned and forgotten by your old state because you were too much of a loser to survive and breakthrough on the battlefield. You don't deserve anything better because you are too weak to matter."

"...!!!"

Ves smirked wider. "Oh, did that upset you, loser? Instead of raging about it like a useless tool, you should instead embrace the opportunity that I am offering you. You can do a lot more with strength. As long as you grow strong enough, you can break the limitations of your new shell and free yourself from your physical cage. You can also attempt to overpower the pilot that has come to rely

on you and maybe even take over his mind and body. Think of it as your only chance to resurrect yourself. Doesn't this sound better than experiencing two different lifetimes as a pathetic loser?"

The Demon Mixer shook with anger!

"What are you doing, Ves!?" She angrily hissed. "Why are you feeding dangerous ideas into this demon? Are you deliberately trying to endanger Joshua?!"

"Relax. It will be fine. Have confidence in your husband. He may have fallen to a low point at the moment, but he will definitely recover. Every hero does. Joshua needs an additional source of adversity to grow. By wielding a D-arm that embodies both power and loss of control, Joshua will constantly have to struggle to tame and pacify this weapon. It is best if he can reduce the Bitter Swordsman hostility and attain true symbiosis. However, even a temporary cooperation is enough. This will keep him on his toes and continuously temper his willpower."

"If you want people to stop calling you a loser, then you need to project strength instead of pointless temper tantrums. I am giving you a chance to gain what you need. The Demoncasting process that I will be subjecting you to will hurt you a lot. I can guarantee you that you will experience so much pain that you will feel tempted to resist to the best of your abilities. Don't. For once in your life, you must demonstrate as much willpower as an expert pilot and do your best to accept and conform to the changes brought by this process. As long as you accept the changes, then you will become bound to the Bitter Scimitar in your strongest state. The weapon will better reflect your new role and properties. So long as you accept these changes, you will retain a greater portion of your effective strength, which you will need to one day contest your wielder's control over his own body."

Ketis moved forward and clutched his arm.

"What are you doing, Ves!?" She angrily hissed. "Why are you feeding dangerous ideas into this demon? Are you deliberately trying to endanger Joshua?!"

"Relax. It will be fine. Have confidence in your husband. He may have fallen to a low point at the moment, but he will definitely recover. Every hero does. Joshua needs an additional source of adversity to grow. By wielding a D-arm that embodies both power and loss of control, Joshua will constantly have to struggle to tame and pacify this weapon. It is best if he can reduce the Bitter Swordsman hostility and attain true symbiosis. However, even a temporary cooperation is enough. This will keep him on his toes and continuously temper his willpower."

"He can do that without you setting the Bitter Swordsman up for a betrayal!"

"Oh, come on, Ketis. We're talking about a demon! Betrayal is in their nature! Their blackened souls can permit nothing else! Since a struggle for dominance cannot be avoided, then there is no harm in stoking it. At least I can exert a measure of control over the competition. Besides, have some faith in your husband. Joshua is not a typical expert pilot, but that makes him all the more precious and unique. He can be strong in his own way. He just needs the opportunity to showcase his own advantages."

After settling Ketis' concerns, Ves moved over to the Demoncasting Forge and approached the rack where all of the molds had been placed.

While the Demoncasting Forge provided dozens of different Demoncasting Molds, Ves did not feel satisfied with the limited selection.

There was only one generic attack enhancement mold that could be applied to any weapon, no matter whether it was a sword or a rifle.

Although this generous purpose mold had a low chance of failure when used on a weapon, Ves had little idea on what exactly grew stronger.

This was yet another indication that Ves should eventually learn to develop his own Demoncasting Molds.

He could design more specialized ones that specifically enhanced different weapons in very specific ways.

However, that was too far away for him. He did not even have access to enlightenment fruits or any other source of information that could teach him the principles and design specifications of these weird molds.

After he swept through the other molds and confirmed that nothing else was more suitable, he commanded a bot to take out the Attack Enhancement Demoncasting Mold and place it in the appropriate slot over at the Demoncasting Forge.

"Alright, let's start."

Anticipation welled up inside Ves as he began the Demoncasting process.

He first used the workshop controls to toss Demon Mixer 5 into the demonic flames!

A loud scream erupted from the demonized demimech as its mech frame literally melted in a matter of seconds!

All of the metal got vaporized or disappeared entirely, leaving nothing else but the Middle Demon, who strangely burned at a much slower rate!

"That is handy." Ketis looked impressed. "How did you know the demonic flames would allow you to separate the demon from his bonded vessel?"

Ves chuckled. "I didn't. I just made an educated guess. These flames are extraordinary. They give me a sense of acute danger whenever I hover too close to it. Besides, I did not want to go through the trouble of manually separating the Bitter Swordsman from his former gu container. My solution is much rougher and has a much greater chance of damaging the demon."

He had made the right bet, as the demonic flames liberated the Middle Demon from his physical shell, only to get roasted without any physical protection!

The Bitter Swordsman roared in pain as his weaker and less stable aspects slowly burned away.

Over time, his form became less defined and more amorphous.

Ves paid close attention to the Middle Demon's state. He eventually trusted his gut feeling and pulled the Bitter Swordsman out at a relatively early timing!

He wanted the demon to retain most of his cognition!

While this would definitely cause the demon to generate greater resistance and increase the chances of a backlash, this was exactly what Ves had in mind for the Bitter Scimitar!

The weapon had to be almost just as dangerous to its wielder in order to serve its noble purpose!

Chapter 6627 An Extension to the Demoncasting Process

From the moment that Ves fished out the partially refined Middle Demon and stuffed him into the Attack Enhancement Demoncasting Mold, his personal involvement in the process had come to an end.

Ves disliked that about the Demoncasting process. He would have been able to feel a bit of agency at this point if he was the one that made the Demoncasting Mold that was being used, but this was not the case.

His fellow mech designer held the same opinion.

"Demoncasting is more suited for mass production." Ketis opined. "The lack of control and agency is both a blessing and a curse. It automates much of the process of merging the demon into the object. Craftsmen who don't know any better have very few opportunities to botch the process. This way, you can delegate this task to less experienced producers. You just need to supply the demons and the target objects and they can do the rest without worrying that they will fail. However, if you want to apply more control and achieve a better fit between the demon and the object, manual forging is the best approach."

He agreed with her. He fully intended to get started on Demonforging when an opportunity arose.

For now, he was relatively happy with Demoncasting as he cared more about.

establishing reliable production than aiming for anything ambitious.

That was not to say that the Bitter Scimitar lacked ambition. Aside from the main Demoncasting process, Ves and Ketis had invested a lot of care, effort and high-quality resources into developing the base weapon.

To be honest, the Bitter Scimitar in its naked and pristine form already possessed the qualifications to serve as a good anti-phasewater tech weapon!

As long as Venerable Joshua activated the command to burn a quantity of phasewater, its edge would gain drastically penetration power, thereby allowing him to slice through most small opponents and rapidly breach the defenses of larger targets!

Expensive or not, Ves believed it was already worth it to boost Joshua and the Everchanger's combat performance. The pair may not be the strongest in the Larkinson Army, but their characteristics represented his design philosophy the best.

Ves had a vested interest in boosting their growth as he could apply a range of life-based solutions to the Everchanger.

As Ves mused whether he should build a phasewater-charged weapon for his own use, the Demoncasting process finally reached a critical junction.

The Demoncasting mold forcibly reshaped the Middle Demon in a form that was more conducive to enhancing the attack power of an object.

The Bitter Swordsman suffered a great amount of torment throughout this phase as he had been pulled out of the demonic flames too soon!

While doing this preserved a greater proportion of his strength, it also made him a bit too rigid to squeeze into the mold.

The demon was undercooked!

This meant that he was not quite malleable enough to fit the mold as effectively as he could have. This should slightly reduce the power of the outcome, but Ves was fine this setback.

The most important outcome to him was that the Bitter Swordsman had not been refined to the point of losing most of his memories and his strength as a Middle Demon!

As for remaining intact enough to be able to put up a more serious fight against its future wielder, Ves saw that as an advantage rather than a disadvantage!

The more the Bitter Swordsman was able to put up a mean fight, the more powerful the D-arm became!

Only by enduring continuous threats from his new weapon would Joshua be able to receive the tempering he needed to unlock his greater potential!



Just as Ves was dreaming about how much more powerful the Everchanger could become when he was piloted by an ace pilot, the transfer phase had finally begun.

Once the reshaped Middle Demon got injected into the masterwork weapon, the giant weapon immediately began to transform!

The weapon grew larger and heavier. The scimitar originally featured a blue-ish tint on much of the blade due its alloy composition. Now, the blue coloration grew brighter and more reflective as it exuded a lot more threat than before!

The technological components that were responsible for augmenting the edge at the cost of burning phasewater also began to experience mutations. They grew in size and

soon became covered in irregularly spaced spherical blue balls.

Ves really hoped that the weapon would retain the ability to augmented its edge through burning phasewater, or else he would grow really upset!

Different from his first attempt at Demoncasting, this time the mutations were not so excessive.

While the weapon did grow out additional spikes that pointed threateningly towards the wielder, they were not as proportionately long or numerous as the ones adorning the Maiden Knife.

Perhaps the masterwork weapon had made a huge difference. Perhaps Ves' provoking statements to the Bitter Swordsman helped to control the distribution of power. Perhaps the much better fit between the different factors reduced the wasted effort.

Whatever the case, the Bitter Scimitar's demonized form still resembled its original form for the most part!

While it had grown a little longer and more massive, these outward changes did not surpass his tolerance for mutations.

What remained uncertain were the changes that weren't visible to the naked eye. He could feel the molded Bitter Swordsman settle into the weapon and infusing it with his demonic power, but how did that improve the performance of the weapon? How much sharper and tougher did it become, and what kind of special abilities did it gain? Unlike the Maiden Knife, Ves did not think the Bitter Scimitar would produce an effect as banal as making the wielder prettier than normal!

Ves could definitely sense that the weapon had become more threatening than before! "This Demoncasting attempt is indeed a lot more successful than your first attempt." Ketis said with a touch of awe. "The differences between the base weapon and the D-arm are significant. I can scarcely imagine how much more powerful the latter has become. If my guess is right, then the Demoncasting may have elevated a first-class weapon into a D-arm that is close to reaching the standards of a super-class weapon!"

That was high praise from Ketis!

Ves owned a few pieces of super-class tech. He had studied the gadgets supplied by the Red Three during his free time, and was not able to decipher much from them. What little he did found out suggested that there were definitely reasons why super-class products existed on an entirely different level compared to regular first-class products. Although he still was not able to examine the new D-arm in detail, Ves made the preliminary judgment that it had not yet reached that supreme level that made it worthy to be wielded by senior ace mechs.

However, this was just the start. The Bitter Scimitar had gained much stronger growth prospects than before.

In any case, it still remained a powerful weapon that could outclass other ones such as the much-celebrated Decapitator and the Instrument of Vengeance.

The latter was a rifle of remarkable design and engineering, but its extraordinary qualities were not too great.

It was different for the Bitter Scimitar!

This was a weapon that was much more defined by its extraordinary qualities!

Without the Middle Demon corrupting and distorting the freshly forged masterwork weapon, the Bitter Scimitar would not be able to keep Ves in the dark about its mysterious enhancements!

When the Demoncasting Mold lifted up and out of the way, the process had finally come to an end.

Ves and Ketis waited for a moment to see whether the demonization process produced any further mutations.

The only other change that took place was that the pommel morphed into the form of a demonic head.

The head was grinning in an ominous fashion.

Thankfully, it remained static and unmoving, but whether it would remain that way was still uncertain.

Just as Ves was about to command the bots to lift the Bitter Scimitar out of the Demoncasting Forge and bring it over to a testing facility, an unexpected situation took place.

The pristine blue skies with idyllic white clouds above their heads abruptly began to darken.

Ves grew slack jawed as he witnessed the classical formation of tribulation clouds!

"Oh, come on! Why do this when you let off the Maiden Knife?! What is it about the Bitter Scimitar that merits this response?!"

One the one hand, triggering a lightning tribulation event was a badge of honor to a craftsman. His work had become 'good' enough to merit a test from the heavens! On the other hand, provoking the wrath of the heavens was dangerous and could ultimately cause his second ever D-arm to crumble into ash and dust!

It all depended on the severity of the lightning tribulation. Ves continued to look up and tried to estimate from the size and energy readings of all of the storm clouds how many lightning bolts would rain down onto the D-arm.

"The good news is that the storm does not look as big or threatening as the last ones I have provoked." Ves ultimately said. "It will probably produce a single-modal lightning tribulation. The only question is how many rounds the heavens will send. It could be one round or two. There is a huge difference between withstanding 9 lightning strikes and 18 lightning strikes."

Ketis looked puzzled. "That does not sound so bad. These lightning strikes start out weak and ramp up after every strike, correct? By the time the 18th strike has landed, our work should still be able to survive. Don't forget that the scimitar will grow a little stronger after withstanding a lightning strike. It will become much stronger and more solid if it manages to survive until the end."

"That is true, Ketis, but you are overlooking one important factor. The heavenly authorities that govern the galaxies and send out lightning tribulations are especially hostile and repellant towards demons. Tribulation lightning is one of the most powerful forms of positive energy. When it strikes a target that is saturated with negative energies, the latter will undergo a painful round of cleansing!"

"Ah, I forgot about that. You are right. This is a serious problem!" Lightning punished evil. This was true in the past, and it would definitely remain true in

the present.

Ves thought about whether he should pick up the Bitter Scimitar and wield it himself in order to help the weapon survive the coming onslaught.

However, he eventually chose not to and allowed the D-arm to withstand the lightning

tribulation while resting on the spot.

So long as the tribulation event did not turn multi-modal and spawned all kinds of simulated opponents, Ves believed that the heavens would only rain down regular lightning bolts from the skies.

If this was the case, then Ketis words still had merit despite her faulty assumption.

Ves stared carefully at the D-arm. The Middle Demon may suffer greatly from the lightning tribulation, but the physical structure of the transformed weapon would definitely undergo a comprehensive round of improvements.

That should help the Middle Demon shelter from the storm clouds hovering above his head.

The stronger the physical form, the more extensively the Middle Demon could use the mech frame as a shield against raw exposure to all of the tribulation lightning energy!

CRACK!

The first lightning bolt already rained down from above!

The Bitter Scimitar suffered very little signs of damage. Only a portion of its blade became scorched, but it was already being repaired by the injection of high-quality creation energies.

CRACK!

The second lightning bolt inflicted more serious damage, but the excellent physical qualities of the weapon again prevented more serious consequences.

Ves relaxed a bit. If the rest of the lightning bolts followed this pattern, then his Bitter

Scimitar may be able to withstand this entire test without being held by the hand of a strong enough warrior!

"This may actually turn out to be a blessing"

Only the worthy deserved to survive a lightning tribulation.

Ves was confident that his latest collaboration work with Ketis met this standard!

Chapter 6628 Heavenly Punishment

Ves did not anticipate that the creation of the Bitter Scimitar would provoke a lightning tribulation.

He assumed that while D-arms were more powerful than typical artifacts that red humanity could produce at this time, they shouldn't be too exaggerated, especially given his lack of familiarity and proficiency with Demoncasting.

His assumptions turned out to be wrong.

Perhaps this may be one of the reasons why Demoncasting had become 'lost'. If it was this easy to provoke the heavens with the creation of D-arms, then those that just started out in this craft would definitely endure a lot of failures!

Fortunately, Ves was not a Demoncaster by profession. He was already an accomplished Senior Mech Designer, and Ketis was not bad at her craft either. The Bitter Scimitar should definitely be able to withstand the first handful of strikes without suffering significant damage.

The question was what would happen after that. Once the successive lightning strikes ramped up, they may be able to pose a much more serious threat to his second D-arm. Ves made a decision and began to act. He stepped forward while at the same time unfolding a part of his true body.

He only grew tall enough to roughly match the Everchanger before using his enlarged hands to grasp the Bitter Scimitar!

"What are you doing, Ves?!"

"I can handle it!" Ves shouted back as he held the Bitter Scimitar in a sloppy upward-facing guard position. "The D-arm needs to be wielded in order to showcase a greater proportion of its strength. This is also a good opportunity for me to temper my true body and spirit by baptizing it with lightning. I will be hitting two birds with one stone!"

CRACK!

Another lightning bolt rained down from above!

The metallic blue Bitter Scimitar let out a brief cry of pain that shocked Ves' mind at the same time the tribulation lightning coursed through his formidable body.

Ves merely grunted in response. This was far from his first encounter with tribulation lightning. The strikes of this magnitude could no longer pose a serious threat to him, but neither did they provide any significant tempering.

However, any little bit of progress helped. Even if his phasewater concentration rose by just 0.1 percent, he would become a bit harder to kill than before!

Fortunately for him, the lightning tribulation did not grow more powerful due to his intervention. Ves was sure he played by the rules this time. The Bitter Scimitar was

meant to be wielded by another person, and few were more suitable than one of its own

creators!

Ketis meanwhile observed him holding the mech-scaled scimitar in a stance that screamed amateur.

His footing was too unstable, his grip was too tight and he lacked the intuition and reaction speed to accurately slice at a lightning bolt that struck down from above.

She wished she could be the one to wield the D-arm instead, but when she looked down at her human-scaled arms, she dismissed this silly notion.

Size mattered!

Her inability to wield any weapons designed for mechs was the reason why nobody took human swordmasters seriously in modern times.

The fact that she was unable to do her job due to the size disparity caused her to develop a much greater yearning to pilot a Carmine mech than before.

During one of her past talks with Ves during the marathon, her former mentor had outlined the solution he had in mind for mech designers.

Ketis had to admit that Polymetal mechs sounded tailor-made for every competent mech designer.

The ability to use their expertise to program bonded smart metal into machines of their own design offered unparalleled flexibility and personalization!

Such a solution was far superior to a more basic Carmine mech that only offered limited room for customization and personalization.

If she had already formed a Blood Pact with a so-called Polymetal mech, then she would have summoned it and used it to move forward and take the scimitar from Ves' unskilled hands!

"Next time."

Ves had yet to formally begin the development of his Polymetal mechs. His schedule was packed with other projects and he still needed to find the right smart metal solution.

In any case, it did not matter whether Ves was an inept swordsman. The D-arm may have crossed a limit, but it had not provoked a response that was as scary as the initial creation of the Elemental Lord.

The fact that the response came in the form of a single-modal lightning tribulation signified that while the Bitter Scimitar crossed a line, it had not violated the most severe taboos.



This told Ves that while the heavens were hostile towards demons, this should mostly be a standard policy. Demons were inherently negative and could drain the life of an entire galaxy if left unchecked!

For this reason, most demons needed to be culled when they managed to get anchored

to the material realm for one reason or another.

As for the demons that managed to withstand heavenly punishment, perhaps the tempering process was a way to bribe the demon and strengthen the bond of karma.

Ves came up with all kinds of theories about this stuff, but right now he needed to keep his head in the game and make sure his creation survived the remaining lightning

strikes!

CRACK!

"Ah!"

The seventh strike had already landed. Ves was feeling the pain, but he had suffered much worse in the past.

The Bitter Scimitar's mutated form managed to hold up for the most part, but the same could not be said for the demon residing inside.

Just as Ves suspected, the Bitter Swordsman was much more susceptible to the harm inflicted by tribulation lightning!

Although he was partially able to heal and strengthen himself right afterwards, once the damage had reached a higher threshold, the Middle Demon could outright perish before he could restore himself with the help of creation energy!

"Is this the challenge that every serious D-arm must go through? How can

Demoncasters possibly keep their products alive?!"

Ves was more than confident in the materials and design of the mech weapon, but he was not able to do much about the demon.

If he knew that his work would provoke a response from the heavens, then he would have devised a solution that could have shielded the demon against this threat!

CRACK!

The eight strike struck with around 30 percent greater power than before!

While Ves could feel his slightly damaged body and spirit obtaining a little more benefits

than before, the demon released a louder cry!

That was not all. His eyes widened as he witnessed the beginnings of a more profound transformation to the D-arm.

The Bitter Scimitar's physical mutations had begun to reverse!

Its blue metallic sheen had grown a little duller, and some of the spikes and sharp angles

grew smaller and softer.

CRAAACK!

The last strike of the first round struck with significantly greater power than before, causing Ves to feel a bit more pain and numbness!

His true body had grown a little larger, and his phasewater concentration must have

bumped up by a small but noticeable extent.

However, Ves no longer cared about advancing his phase lord cultivation and instead grew a lot more concerned about the worsening state of his creation.

The Bitter Scimitar had lost even more progress than before!

arm." Ves suddenly reali

"It is

"The tribulation lightning... is purifying the weakening the merger between the demon and the mech weapon. If this continues... even if the Bitter Swordsman is barely able to hold on to his life, he will become completely detached from the masterwork scimitar, thereby causing him to lose his physical anchor. If we don't take action to put him in another shelter, he will be banished

from this realm!"

Either way, the heavens would get rid of another harmful demon.

"Since it is possible to reverse the Demoncasting process, it should also be possible to

promote it again." Ketis guessed. "See if you can find a way to restore and reinforce the

bond between the demon and the scimitar."

Ves rapidly tried to come up with a solution.

Time was short. The storm clouds up above grew darker and more energetic. The next 9

lighting strikes were only going to inflict more damage!

The intense pressure and his high emotional investment in this project rapidly caused him to come up with series of hasty countermeasures.

First, he changed his stance.

Instead of offering the blade to the heavens as if he was a supplicant, he reversed its grip

so that the curved tip pointed downwards before he started to hunch his back.

At the same time, his true body grew even larger, causing his smart clothing to strain even further to cover his dignity!

This not only allowed him to withstand damage a little better, but also allowed him to provide full physical cover to the proportionately smaller mech weapon!

Once he had reached his slightly improved maximum size, the mech scimitar resembled

a curved dagger in his oversized limbs!

This made it a lot easier for him to shield the weapon from most angles!

CRACK!

A golden lightning bolt struck his back and coursed through much of his upper body before finally running through the length of the Bitter Scimitar!

Ves attempted to divert a part of the tribulation lightning directly down to his legs and into the soil of the mountaintop, but that did not work. The tribulation lightning did not behave like normal electricity and did not always follow the path of least resistance. The Bitter Scimitar attracted it like a magnetic pole. Once the tribulation lightning had reached the tip, it continued to burst out across the air gap before directly passing

through the ground.

The demon suffered much more severe damage this time as he had yet to fully recover

from the previous strike.

What distressed Ves the most was that the Bitter Scimitar lost even more potency due to the reversing demonization!

"Blinky!"

"Mrow!"

This was the second solution he came up with. His companion spirit quickly went into action and began to disgorge a large amount of E energy from the Blinkyverse!

Much of it consisted of a mixture of life-attributed E energy and darkness-attributed E energy.

Ves had an affinity in both, so he was able to exert much better control over them. He and Blinky worked together to feed the raw E energies to the demon.

He quickly noticed that the different attributes had a different effect on the demon.

As a negative energy life form, the demon was easily able to absorb darkness energy. The

Bitter Swordsman used it to quickly repair his spiritual injuries and restore his energy reserves.

What was also interesting was that the darkness energy was remarkably effective at promoting the demonization process. The Bitter Scimitar had regained a small measure of demonization, causing it to regain a portion of its lost strength! Feeding the Middle Demon with positive E energy did not directly promote the demonization process, but gave the Bitter Swordsman a fairly powerful tonic that promoted his growth and healing more effectively.

While the Bitter Swordsman experienced other effects that Ves was not able to detect

or analyse, he at least managed to confirm that using Blinky to feed the D-arm with E energy successfully restored it to an extent.

However, this was not a sustainable solution!

CRACK!

The Bitter Swordsman had yet to recover to his peak condition and already got blasted

by a more powerful dose of tribulation lightning!

Not only did the strike undo the previous restoration effort, but also set the demon back

even further!

"Damnit! Blinky is not strong enough yet! He can only output so much E energy at a

time!"

"Ves!" Ketis shouted from the side! "You are not doing this right! Instead of feeding the D-arm with raw E energy, you need to use your power to resist it like a warrior! If you can't fight the storm like a sword practitioner, then at least fight as if you are a phase

lord and a qi cultivator!"

That... was actually not a bad idea!

Ves immediately decided to adopt her advice and tried his best to figure out how to leverage his powers to preserve his D-arm!

Chapter 6629 I Am Not A Loser

The reminder from Ketis woke Ves up from his thoughtless approach.

What the hell was he doing?

He had witnessed instances of mechs and mech pilots resisting lightning tribulations in the past.

Just because the current one was only a single-modal lightning tribulation did not mean he should approach this challenge in such a stupid manner.

If he wanted his latest work to resist the punishment raining down from above, then he needed to fight!

The D-arm needed to fight as well! Passively resisting the attacks was not enough. Even if the Bitter Swordsman managed to cling onto his new life, his arrogance and aggression would have all but melted away.

This was not what Ves sought in this D-arm!

Its demon needed to be strong, powerful, active and rebellious!

When Ves reflected on his current actions and realized how he was approaching this in the completely wrong way, he quickly changed his stance and demeanor.

He stared up at the storm clouds with challenging eyes and felt a surge of courage welling up inside his heart.

This was the proper way to meet a lightning tribulation!

Now that he had shaken off the mindset of a civilian and adopted the perspective of a warrior, Ves began to take control over the surrounding E energy radiation.

The charged environment generated by the tribulation storm made it a little more difficult than normal, but Ves still managed to attract a respectable amount of life energy, metal energy and to a lesser extent darkness energy.

Blinky meanwhile continued to disgorge the same energies from the Blinkyverse at the highest possible rate.

The aperture that connected the Blinkyverse from the main universe was still on the smaller end, but the Star Cat still helped by raising the concentration of E energy around Ves.

This was enough!

Ves did not just gather a lot of energy just to mash them into the Bitter Scimitar without direction.

That would only recreate the same results as before.

If he wanted to utilize the greater potential of all of these energies, then he needed to shape them into more effective forms.

Just like a qi cultivator!

The problem was that Ves was not strictly a qi cultivator.

Sure, he absorbed a bunch of enlightenment fruits and learned a lot of basic and miscellaneous spells and techniques, but that did not change the fact that he had little clue on how exactly he should defend himself against the lightning tribulation!

This was a major oversight. If he was able to anticipate this possibility in advance, he could have taken the time to form a detailed contingency plan and be ready to take action in an instant.

"Let's see, is it okay to use other equipment?"

He was thinking about pulling out the Flower Parasol and using its extraordinary defensive characteristics to reduce the incoming damage.

He could also temper the artifact by subjecting it to a lightning baptism. However, he ultimately decided not to take the risk. This tribulation was test for a special kind of artifact. Trying to resist the heavenly punishment by relying on the protection of another artifact defeated the purpose. This



should also apply for other pieces of gear as long as they were powerful enough. The lighting tribulation would definitely grow more severe as a response!

Since that was the case, Ves could only make use of his inherent powers.

He decided to save up his spatial barrier and avoid using any spatial abilities. Perhaps they might help to lower the damage, but only for a short amount of time. He needed to save his spatial barrier for a critical moment.

This meant that he had little choice but to rely on qi manipulation to cope with the damage.

Ves did not stop with channeling E energy into the Bitter Scimitar, but he leveraged much of the metal energy into a silvery translucent energy shield above his gigantic head.

It formed just in time to meet the next strike!

CRACK!

"OUCH!"

Ves instantly suffered a headache as his basic metal energy shield shattered like glass after getting struck by the golden lightning bolt.

This was not the right way to defend against tribulation lightning!

Ves really wished that he had learned how to fight and defend himself as a qi cultivator. Compared to a ruthless and ambitious schemer and murderer like his infamous mother, his ability to wield E energy in combat was too basic and rudimentary!

He shouldn't be blamed for this. How could he expect to be put in a situation where he

had to resist a tribulation event in order to defend one of his precious creations? The inability to rely on allies, subordinates, technological equipment, high-level artifacts and more directly stripped many of his accumulated advantages.

The lack of more solid tribulation manifestations that took on the form of alien swordsmen or scary beats meant that much of his offensive power as a phase lord became useless as well.

The only way out for Ves was to manipulate E energy well enough to pass this challenge, but his lack of skill and experience in these sorts of situations made it difficult to

maintain his confidence.

What if he screwed up? What if he was unable to control so much E energy and apply it onto an ambitious technique?

Fortunately, he was not alone in this. As a bystander, Ketis was able to track what happened and adopt a sober perspective towards the current incident.

"It is impossible for you to learn swordsmanship and learn how to resist the lightning tribulation more effectively." Ketis hastily said. "Learning and mastering techniques is the way to go, but you shouldn't cast them in isolation. The Bitter Scimitar is a D-arm based on a masterwork artifact. You should be able to use it as a wand or a casting aid. Try and actively channel energy into it and see if you can reinforce its structure or perform a technique, similar to all of the sword techniques that you have witnessed in the past." That was a good idea. He even came up with a suggestion of his own now that he had corrected his mindset.

"I designed this D-arm with the intention of forming a cooperative relationship with it. Joshua and his Everchanger can only utilize it to its full potential if the Bitter Scimitar agreed to combine forces with each other. At the very least, this weapon should have gained powers derived from its demon!"

He urgently tried to communicate with the weapon.

"What are you doing? Don't you want to prove you are more than a loser who is destined to get beaten up and killed like a bedraggled dog? Where is your fighting spirit?! Are you truly about to let yourself get exorcised or banished by tribulation lightning? Wake up and work with me! I may not be your intended wielder, but I am the only person available here who is willing to fight for your right to survive! If you want to survive the remaining tribulation lightning strikes, then you better open yourself up to me and

reveal your capabilities!"

Though the Middle Demon's nature compelled him to resist and attack his creator and current wielder, his rationality remained intact enough for him to understand that this was a bad time to attack those who were willing to render him assistance. The Bitter Scimitar rested more comfortably in his oversized hands. The D-arm did not. turn over a new leaf, but the demon that governed its function merely made the

pragmatic decision to join forces with his current wielder.

The Bitter Scimitar seemed to come alive. The blue metallic surface shone brighter and more resplendent as the weapon sucked in a lot of life, darkness and metal-attributed E

energy!

Ves and Blinky worked together to shape all of the E energy so that they reinforced the structure of the entire weapon.

It was as if they suited up the Bitter Scimitar with armor made out of E energy.

CRACK!

This time, the D-arm endured the tribulation a lot better than last time!

While the weapon and demon still incurred severe damage, Ves grew happy when he observed they did not suffer as much damage as he feared.

While the damage reduction effect from the previous technique was not that strong, it

still managed to make a difference!

"That's it! You can do more than that! Come, show me your true power! I shall grant you

as much energy you can harness, so do not hold back!"

The Bitter Swordsman was doing its best to recover from the damage that had

previously occurred.

Not all was bad. The greater the damage, the stronger he became after absorbing the creation energy passed on by the golden lightning bolts.

Even demons could benefit from lightning baptisms!

They just had to be able to withstand the power that was intensively hostile towards their kind!

"C'mon! Hurry up! The next strike will come soon!"

As the Bitter Scimitar continued to absorb more energy, it finally began to display one of its intrinsic powers as a D-arm.

A second arm holding a sword came into existence!

The arm looked incredibly weird. It did not look like the arm of a mech or a human at all.

The arm instead took on a distinctly demonic appearance!

The demonized sword also did not give off a good impression. Ves did not recognize the weapon, but surmised it may have been based on one of the mech swords wielded by the Middle Demon during his first lifetime.

Of course, the sword had also mutated to the point where it had too many unnecessary spikes and sharp angles!

"What a strange ability."

The newly emerged limb and sword matched the proportions of the Bitter Scimitar. The new additions therefore looked a little too small and weak compared to Ves' full-sized form.

After a bit of thought, he decided to shrink his size until he became as large as the Everchanger.

The additional sword arm looked a lot more harmonious as it took up a position directly behind his shoulder!

Though Ves remained skeptical on whether the manifestations of a demonic arm and a demonic sword could resist the onslaught, he allowed the ghost arm to wield its semi-tangible limb as if it was a part of his body.

CRACK!

When the next strike arrived, Ves clearly felt the effects of the D-arm's more active intervention.

The ghostly arm rapidly swung upwards and actually managed to intercept the lightning bolt as it soared down at speeds far exceeding the reaction speed of a human! That was not all. Moments before the storm clouds were about to erupt, Ves found to his

surprise that the D-arm wanted to take control of his own arm and raise the Bitter

Scimitar in a specific guard position!

Ves quickly dropped his resistance just in time for his arm to move under the weapon's direction and meet the incoming tribulation lighting!

"Ahh!"

The Middle Demon screamed in agony as pieces of himself literally got scoured away by the latest strike!

Yet for all of the pain and damage, the Bitter Swordsman successfully managed to mitigate a significantly greater proportion of damage.

This encouraged Ves even further. He lowered his guard and gave the Bitter Swordsman greater access to his body. He completely disregarded the associated risks, knowing that the demon would not try to harm him during this crucial juncture.

The Bitter Swordsman wanted to live!

It wanted to enjoy its second life to the fullest!

Meeting a premature end when it was just about to embark on a new life was not acceptable to the Middle Demon!

"I AM NOT A LOSER!"

Ves could feel the demon take control of his body as if mimicking his old fighting style as

a dual wielding specialist!

Ketis grew incredibly impressed at this sight. She had a feeling that her attempt to

imbue the Bitter Scimitar with a specific sword style had caused it to develop in this strange direction after getting Demoncasting.

The sight was incredibly absurd! It was as if the Bitter Swordsman was piloting Ves' body

as if it was a biomech! The fact that this was even possible defied common sense!

"No wonder the heavens are so jealous. This D-arm is too absurd!"

Chapter 6630 Bitter Pride

This lightning tribulation gave Ves a very necessary dose of reality.

If he wanted to develop a personal Polymetal mech for himself that he could one day use as his own version of a phase lord raiment, then this was not enough to turn himself into an effective combatant.

Ves also needed the courage, the fighting spirit, the combat acumen and the weapon skills in order to make the most out of his gear and other endowments!

It couldn't be helped. Ves was a mech designer by nature. While he did have a bunch of incarnations that allowed him to accrue other kinds of knowledge, very little of it was related to helping him become a better fighter.

At most, he received adjacent information on how other mech pilots and soldiers fought. That was purely theoretical knowledge and did not infuse him with any remarkable fighting skills.

Even his power as a phase lord was mostly a facade. Compared to the well-trained and highly elite soldiers of the Ur-Titan Phalanx, Ves was a complete scumbag of a phase lord!

He had not developed his spatial abilities all that much, and he was not able to effectively leverage his gigantic physique like an actual fighter.

He also did not undergo any systematic combat training, so he wouldn't be able to coordinate effectively alongside mechs or other human phase lords on the battlefield.

In short, Ves was still a creator at heart. If Ketis received the same endowments as him, she would definitely be able to defeat ten versions of himself!

Even though his lack of combat training held him back in certain situations, Ves had no intentions of devoting a significant amount of time or resources on addressing this shortcoming.

Instead, Ves believed it was much more convenient if he could borrow the excellent fighting skills of other powerful soldiers and warriors!

One of the plans he had in mind was to use a Divine Envoy like Imon Ingvar as a 'spiritual mech pilot'.

When the time was right, he would figure out a way for Imon Ingvar to come out and directly possess his body as if he was piloting a biomech!

Hopefully, there should be enough parallels between piloting a mech and controlling the body of a phase lord that most of Imon Ingvar's piloting skills transferred over to this abnormal situation.

This had always remained an idea, though. It was nothing more than a daydream as far as Ves was concerned.

He never expected that he would get to experience a version of this solution when

wielding the Bitter Scimitar!

In hindsight, he shouldn't be too surprised. Not only did he design the masterwork D-arm with symbiosis in mind, but he had also made sure to prep the Middle Demon to be able to take over its own wielder when the opportunity arose!

Ves initially found it quite scary to surrender his body to a foreign party to this degree. He instinctively wanted to resist and wrest back control, but he did his best to hold himself back.



At this point, he needed to place his trust in his own arrangements. The Bitter Swordsman was rational enough to understand the stakes. The repeated lightning strikes already made him feel as if he was half-dead, and the power of the following strikes would only ramp up further!

Given the dire circumstances, neither Ves nor the Bitter Swordsman wasted any time on useless planning or discussions.

They communicated with each other on a level that went beyond verbal communication. Unfortunately, a lot of messages got lost in translation. Ves was not a mech pilot or a soldier, so he was unable to interpret his counterpart's meanings.

It didn't matter. The Middle Demon rapidly familiarized himself with the novel experience of 'piloting' a giant human body.

Although the actual experience was far different from piloting a typical humanoid mech, the demon somehow gained a remarkable talent and ability to control all bodies it was able to access.

Since Ves strangely lowered almost all of his defenses to a minimum, the demon encountered virtually no resistance, so his acclimation speed was therefore incredibly fast!

The Bitter Swordsman did not betray Ves' expectations.

Although he was still getting the hang of controlling Ves' true body which was currently scaled to the size of a high-end second-class mech, by the time the next lightning bolt struck, the demon responded a lot more fiercely than Ves ever could!

The Middle Demon moved Ves' untrained but naturally powerful true body in a proficient manner and used both a real arm and a ghost arm to cross two sword blades in front of his chest in a guard position while pumping as much E energy into the weapons as possible!

CRACK!

The lightning strike struck the crossed blades and passed through them, but not before weakening by a significant margin!

Both the Bitter Swordsman and Ves' body ultimately received a less severe shock. Just as the next strike was due to arrive, the Bitter Swordsman continued to explore and

figure out his new abilities as a Middle Demon.

He could do more than conjure up a ghost arm and easily take possession of Ves' body! "Don't forget about your domain!" Ketis shouted from the side! "As a recently promoted Middle Demon, you have grown equivalent to a fresh ace pilot! You should have a power that is similar to a Saint Kingdom but weaker. Try and unfold it so that you can harness

more energy!"

The Bitter Swordsman did as instructed. He did not know it before Ketis spoke, but now that she gave him a crucial reminder, he suddenly discovered that he could indeed deploy his domain outward!

A fairly weak domain began to expand from the Bitter Scimitar. Ves and Ketis could immediately feel that it was filled with negative energy.

What was special was that this domain used to be weaker a short time ago. After getting repeatedly baptized by tribulation lightning, the domain had already transformed to an extent. It had grown stronger and was better able to cope against the wrath of the

heavens.

While it was rather messy and polluted, the more dominant attributes were pride, murder and darkness. These had become the most prominent traits or obsessions of the

Bitter Swordsman after he had become demonized.

Yet the Middle Demon's domain also gained a small measure of symbiosis, which was derived from the life element.

In ancient cultivation parlance, this was the small bit of bright yang energy that accentuated all of the dark yin energy.

The benefits of retaining a small measure of an opposing attribute were myriad. No one could completely understand light unless they also grew familiar with darkness, and vice

versa.

The Bitter Swordsman may still be weak among other Middle Demons, but he possessed more control over himself and could execute his techniques with greater skill and

precision!

Even though it was impossible for a former expert candidate to perfectly replicate the refined body control and extraordinary combat techniques of an ace pilot, the Bitter Swordsman had grown so miraculously stronger after his demonization that he was definitely able to fight at a level far exceeding when he was still alive!

Ves could still clearly perceive this difference even if he had no true understanding of the nuances of every movement and technique.

CRACK!

This time, the Bitter Swordsman leveraged his weak domain as well as his control over Ves' body, and managed to attain an even better result!

The domain not only expanded the amount of E energy that he was able to harness, but

also provided a little extra protection against the lightning bolt!

This time, both the physical sword and the ghost sword slashed upwards at the exact same time, producing a strange form of resonance that temporarily raised their ability to

withstand the shock!

Although the Bitter Swordsman suffered greater trauma by incurring significant damage to his domain, it could have been worse!

The Bitter Scimitar may actually be able to get out of this ordeal stronger and more

cohesive than ever.

"Only three more left!" Ketis shouted in encouragement! "The final strikes will be heavy, but I know you can do it. A blade forged from my hand should never fall apart so easily."

The tribulation storm certainly tried.

CRACK!

This time, the Bitter Swordsman managed to conjure up more metal and darkness energy and used his two swords to form a strange energy whirlpool that blocked a greater proportion of the incoming lightning strike than before!

This move successfully exhausted a greater proportion of the power of the tribulation

lightning.

The physical scimitar became slightly deformed and its degree of demonization had

dropped, but the Middle Demon already began to 'repair the damage after absorbing a lot of mixed energies.

Ves grew a little more apprehensive. The punishment to his body became more severe. While that meant that his true body was finally growing a little bit faster, he knew that the Bitter Swordsman must be enduring a lot more torment.

"Hang on! You still have an entire life ahead of you. Do not give up. Prove that you deserve a second chance by denying the heavens themselves! Do your best to stop the attempt to drag your tainted soul to the afterlife and prove that you are strong enough

to defy death itself!"

Pride and conceit swelled from the Bitter Scimitar!

The physical blade as well as the ghost sword began to spun in a way that stirred up a lot

of ambient E energy. A stronger sense of resonance affected Ves. It was as his true body had become the Bitter Swordsman's expert mech!

Unfortunately, Ves was not a real expert mech. His ability to resonate with the Bitter

Swordsman was too weak.

CRACK!

The second-to-last lighting strike inflicted more severe damage than before!

Both Ves and the Bitter Swordsman screamed, with the latter suffering significantly

more damage!

Due to the sub-optimal circumstances, the Bitter Swordsman was only able to elevate his ability to resist the lightning tribulation to this extent and no further.

He needed a lot more time to get the hang of his domain, his new abilities and the novel experience of piloting the body of a human 'phase lord'!

Even if the Middle Demon had become unnaturally good at understanding its innate

abilities and learning how to control Ves' body, he ultimately needed a lot more time to

translate his many new capabilities into actual combat power. That was time that he did not have!

As the storm clouds in the skies of the System Space grew thicker and more ominous,

Ves and the damaged Bitter Scimitar knew that they were facing their final test. More and more energies surged into the last discharge of tribulation lightning. Just like the 9th strike, the 18th one promised to be an unusually strong attack!

Ves' mouth began to smirk. Whether that was due to Ves or the Bitter Swordsman remained unclear.

The true body began to flourish both blades before confidently pointing their tips

upwards!

"I DEFY YOU!"

CRAAAAACK!

Just before the final bright golden lightning bolt struck, a spatial barrier briefly came into

existence, only to break right afterwards as it was unable to resist the full force of the

attack!

Yet because Ves had activated one of his spatial defenses before the final strike, the lightning bolt expended just enough energy that it was not as good at overcoming the subsequent layers of defense as before.

When the tribulation lightning finally struck the Bitter Scimitar, it looked scorched and slightly deformed, but it still retained part of its demonized state!

As for the Bitter Swordsman, the damage inflicted by the 18th strike had indeed brought

him a lot closer to his death, but the infusion of creation energy had partially restored him and strengthened his foundation to a much more significant degree than before! "HAHAHAHAHA! I LIVE! I DEFIED THE HEAVENS!"

As the Bitter Swordsman slowly healed from his remaining injuries, the Bitter Scimitar recovered as well.

Its degree of demonization not only deepened to its original level, but even went a step further, becoming stronger, weirder and more mysterious by the second! Ves grinned with extreme satisfaction as he took back control over his body.

He expected for the Bitter Swordsman to resist, but the final strike briefly left him far too injured to put up a good fight.

It didn't matter. Ves was more than confident he could forcibly regain control over his body with the help of his companion spirit.

If that did not work, then Ketis and the Heavensword would definitely be able to lend a

hand! Ves did not think about that, though. All he had in mind was the fact that his first proper

D-arm finally began to live up to his high expectations.

"This is the true power of Demoncasting!"