

The Mech 4811

Chapter 4811 Cat and Sword

Ketis was already a powerful killing machine by herself.

Even if those elite pescans managed to gather and surround her from multiple angles, she would have been able to figure out a way to break out of the encirclement and turn the tables against her formidable opponents.

It just would have taken a lot of time, effort and risk in order to solve these latest problems.

Now that Lucky had made his move, everything became much easier!

Having fought alongside each other several times before, Ketis and Lucky had long developed a tacit understanding on how to coordinate their actions.

Ketis ostentatiously made her presence known and attracted much of the attention of the enemy. This created many easy opportunities for Lucky to slip through the cracks and attack the opposing soldiers when their focus was directed elsewhere!

It was a familiar dynamic and one that worked like a charm. The swordmaster and the gem cat continually mowed over one alien after another with their deadly talents.

The only pity was that Lucky found himself unable to phase through the thick transphasic stone floor. This made it a bit harder for the cat to sneak up on enemies undetected.

Fortunately, the cat was much smaller than the humans the pescans were targeting, so Lucky still managed to use the surrounding cover to get close to his next targets.

"Meow!"

"Cut!"

None of the aliens in their path lasted long enough to hinder the pair too much. It was only after they started to approach the immobilized tank that they encountered more organized opposition.

It appeared that the pescan commanders had taken notice of the lone human and her pet rampaging in their midst!

Just as Ketis and Lucky approached a squad of pescan troopers that were coated in a different color than usual, the swordmaster abruptly altered her course!

"Evade!"

Her warning gave Lucky enough time to fly out of the way before an explosive blast engulfed the place where they were about to walk over.

More attacks struck in the general direction of the pair, forcing them to split up in an attempt to reduce the intensity of the incoming attacks.

Four metal giants revealed themselves through the debris of the structures that used to obstruct their vision.

"The intelligence reports said nothing about this model of pescan battle suits!"

The newcomers towered over every other human or pescan combatant. Their height approached four meters while their bulk was much more considerable.

Their greater sizes imbued them with lots more power. Not only were the weak points in their armor covered by thick plating without exception, they also mounted several more weapon systems onto their forms, including ones that could attack behind their backs!

Ketis quietly cursed. "These giant battle suits are too difficult to take down at close range."

He could see that every giant alien trooper was armed with a shotgun-like transphasic cannon.

The coverage of these devastating shotguns was so wide that Ketis would hardly be able to evade them if she got caught in their cones.

Though the firing rate of these weapons were awfully slow, all four of these giants knew how to cover for each other!

"What I wouldn't give to have a missile. Even a grenade is fine!"

What she truly wanted was her Bloodsinger and her true suit of combat armor. She would have been able to dismantle them one way or another if she had her best equipment at hand.

She should have learned a lesson from Ves and form a habit of carrying her own combat gear around!

Ketis knew that if they managed to survive all of this, she and her fellow Larkinsons would definitely change their ways. If even a planet as well-defended as Davute could turn into a crisis-ridden danger zone, then no other place was truly safe!

"Lucky! Are you alright, buddy?!"

"Meow meow!"

"We need to take out these giants first before they can threaten the others. Let's find a way to get close!"

"Meow...!"

The pescans that had been waiting for her arrivals worked together to put her under pressure through the use of increasingly overwhelming firepower.

"Ah!"

Ketis winced as one of the powerful transphasic energy weapons mounted on one of the battle suits had clipped her armored leg.

She anticipated the attack in advance, but found herself unable to evade it because she would place her body in the way of deadlier attacks!

Too many enemies were targeting her at the moment. It took all of her effort to test and exceed the limitations of her borrowed suit of combat armor.

Even if it was designed with moderate maneuverability in mind, its servos had never been designed to perform so many powerful and nimble movements in such a short span of time.

She knew exactly how much abuse they could take, and she understood clearly that they would fail her within a minute if she kept stressing to such an extent!

The aliens had wisened up at this time. Not all of them fired their weapons at Ketis even if that would make it likelier to score a hit on her body.

At least two of the giants and a third of the other pescan soldiers were keeping their eye out for the appearance of a certain mechanical cat.

Lucky did not dare to dash forward rashly, especially when the aliens had deliberately blasted all of the surrounding cover away.

The pescans realized that all of these obstacles benefited their current opponents a lot more than themselves!

TZZZ!

Three powerful transphasic laser beams seared the position that Ketis was in, forcing her to make an ungainly roll in order to evade all of them at the same time.

This left her unable to evade the shotgun blast that one of the giant suits fired in her direction!

Fortunately, the spread of this sweeping gun was so wide that not a lot of transphasic pellets struck her armored form.

Ketis had bent over and desperately tried to shrink her silhouette as much as possible, taking special care to protect her head.

Clank! Clank! Clank! Tz!

Several armor plates suffered penetrating damage and would have cut through her body if not for her personal shield generator.

Even then, the outdated device strained to block the kinetic energy that was left. The capacity of its battery drained considerably in order to save Ketis from suffering any actual wounds.

She couldn't withstand these attacks much longer!

The only other choice she could make was to make a tactical retreat, but that would delay or postpone all of her efforts into providing the other human fighters the support they needed to push through this assault!

Despite the massive amount of pescans killed so far, this enclave of alien exiles still had plenty more bodies to throw into the fight!

The pescans brought out more and more armed civilians, wounded soldiers and odd war machines.

Even their children entered the fight! The smaller humanoids couldn't fit into any of the adult-sized battle suits, but they could still contribute in various ways such as ferrying crucial supplies or manning simple defensive systems.

Seeing how extensively the pescans sought to crush the resistance from all of the humans, Ketis grew a lot more concerned.

Just like Ves, Ketis sensed a looming danger surging from the center of the prison facility.

It was as if a star was about to go supernova. A major event was about to occur and the nature of the threat was so massive that a swordmaster like herself could do nothing to resist against its might!

"No! I cannot let that happen!"

Just as Ketis' willpower surged to push back against the massive amount of pressure induced by the current circumstances, a strange development occurred.

"Reeeerriiaarrreee!"

A wounded and crippled pescan soldier roared in panic as he ran towards the circle of soldiers.

The injured pescan male who was clearly a civilian has suffered an awful gash in his arm that caused it to spurt dark red blood.

"Ayyyhhaa! Rrehha!"

The conscripted fighter wasn't supposed to run in this direction and a couple of professional soldiers warned the wounded alien to move to a different location!

The wounded alien did not do so as his panic and his pain blinded his sensibilities.

He just wanted his life to be saved!

position!

Though the soldiers surrounding the four giant battle suits continued to make threatening movements with their arm cannons, they ultimately did not do anything else to stop the intrusion.

That was the worst decision that they could have made.

As soon as a pescan field medic or the like came close in order to treat the injured conscript's wounds, a bronze cat phased right out of the latter's body and jumped into the next one!

Both the constrict and the medic screamed before their bodies collapsed.

It turned out that Lucky had not only phased through their armor and bodies as if they were air, but also skillfully materialized a claw from the moment it was about to pass through their alien hearts, thereby inflicting fatal wounds on both!

This was a skill that the Black Cats forced Lucky to learn until he was able to assassinate any human with a near-perfect success rate!

Although the pescans possessed bodies that significantly deviated from the human norm, they possessed hearts like all humanoid creatures, and that was enough for Lucky.

If nothing else, he could also run his claws through other vital organs such as the brain.

"MEOW!"

Even though it was extremely dangerous for Lucky to rampage in the middle of the enemy formation, the pescans were completely caught off-guard by his creative means of approaching their position!

By the time the sluggish pescans registered what was taking place, the cat had already run his claws through a dozen nearby soldiers at once!

Their decision to cluster together had given Lucky a lot of cover and convenience. He could kill a lot of enemies in quick succession and also take advantage of the fear of causing friendly fire.

Ever since the pescan race had been reduced to a couple of thousand individuals, each of them had become incomparably precious to the continuation of their species!

For years, the pescans had lived in a time where their race and civilization had reached the lowest point. Killing each other had become a cardinal sin, and they had been repeatedly instructed to never harm the few pescans left alive.

The strong hesitation this induced in the soldiers caused them to become extremely reluctant to open fire in the direction of any friendlies!

This was a major flaw of the pescan race. Their close combat abilities were non-existent due to their short arms and the other limitations of their race. They had only waged war from various distances and tactics involving closing in on opponents were non-existent as far as they were concerned.

"Meeeeeoow!"

Lucky's only regret was that this tactic didn't work against the giant battle suits or the other soldiers equipped with transphasic armor. His body simply couldn't phase through them with his current level of strength!

It would take concerted attacks to breach transphasic armor, but that would take so much time that the enemy would definitely be able to retaliate.

Just as Lucky continued to throw the enemy ranks into chaos, Ketis took advantage of the lapse in concentration of the enemy and boldly charged forward!

"I shall cut your armor!"

Ketis charged towards an elite soldier and sliced her weapon straight through his neck, causing yet another head to be flung in the air!

She kicked against the body of another tall alien and thrust the tip of her sword into the rear of another elite soldier!

After clearing up these threats, she dashed straight towards the pescans equipped with the largest and most formidable battle suits!

However, before she could get close enough to test the sharpness of her blade against the armor of her latest foes, several transphasic energy shields came online and completely blocked her passage!

Chapter 4812 The Four Giants

The emergence of transphasic technology had led to a major upgrade of human technological capabilities.

Phasewater made everything better or stronger.

From the native aliens of the Red Ocean to the latest batch of pioneers who just passed through the greater beyond gate, phasewater had become the most useful exotic to everyone.

Although humans were in the process of improving their many different applications of phasewater at a rapid tempo, the native aliens unquestionably mastered its uses to a much higher degree!

Even a relatively backwards and isolated race like the pescans had managed to refine their integration of phasewater in different forms of technology over many generations.

This gradual process of iterative improvements along with occasional exposure to more advanced transphasic products utilized by the nunsers allowed the pescans to make good use out of the small amounts of phasewater they were allowed to use for themselves.

The aliens invested much resources and effort into developing the four giant battle suits.

Each of them had originally been designed to guard the great chief of the native city state of Davute during formal addresses and other important events.

Though the speed and mobility of these towering metal suits were extremely poor, their defensive and offensive power more than made up for these shortcomings!

When combat constructs reached this size and scale, they no longer fit the definition of infantry suits anymore.

Although they had not quite reached the scale of mechs, they straddled the line between infantry and combat vehicles!

Even though an ordinary mech should be able to crush these thick and lumbering alien suits of armor, it was a bit too much to ask for a single swordmaster to defeat all of them at once.

This circumstance clearly showed how extraordinary warriors such as swordmasters could put so much work and effort into becoming strong, only to get surpassed by crude products of technology that only performed better by virtue of being a lot bigger!

Of course, Ketis was still a relatively junior swordmaster who was separated from her preferred equipment, but it rankled her a lot that four transphasic shield generators stood in the way between her and her latest opponents!

Her sword shimmered with stars as she continuously slashed them against the active energy shields in the way.

Even though Venerable Dise's Phase Cutter technique allowed Ketis to destabilize the transphasic energy shields with remarkable effectiveness, the alien shield generators possessed a surprising amount of capacity for resisting damage.

Ketis estimated that it would take around a dozen strikes to overcome an energy shield, and that still left her with three more that she also had to destroy!

"Break for me, already!"

The glittering points of light that struck the energy shield in the way had been gradually corroding the energy shield before her. Just as it was close to breaking apart, the damaged shield in question reduced its range, causing it to make way for a fresh and undamaged energy shield!

"What?!"

By pulling back the damaged energy shield, the giant battle suit that projected it could calmly restore its integrity and make it as good as new with much less trouble.

In the meantime, the energy shield projected by another giant battle suit could easily resist just as many attacks!

As Ketis slashed her sword against the energy shield, she felt more and more helpless as the aliens performed the same trick yet again.

A third energy shield stood in her way as the second one moved back so that it could recover to its original state.

"So this is why there are four of them." Ketis frowned as she hastily evaded three incoming laser beam attacks. "They are designed to work in unison!"

Their design and configuration clearly reflected that. So long as neither Ketis nor any other enemies were able to punch through multiple transphasic energy shields in quick succession, these dastardly giant battle suits would be able to rotate their regenerating energy barriers on a continuous basis!

While the energy required to power these transphasic energy shields was considerable, much of the bulk of these giant suits were dedicated to keeping them running.

The protection offered by their armor was not as much as the protection granted by their energy shields!

This fit with the trend of the Red Ocean. Only relatively poor states and organizations relied on armor to protect their assets from attacks. It was a lot more efficient and convenient to rely on strong energy shields instead!

"We can't go on like this!" Ketis cursed. "We need a better way to breach these energy shields. Do you have any trick up your sleeve, Lucky?!"

"Meeeeeeoow!" Lucky whined and complained as he attempted to fend off a batch of reinforcements that had just arrived from afar.

Transphasic technology was his nemesis. The gem cat could easily kill any other soldier that made use of powerful tech and equipment, but once they made use of transphasic defenses, the cat instantly lost his biggest advantage which was the ability to phase through solid matter!

Since the entire prison structure was made out of hardy transphasic stone, Lucky couldn't even use his other favorite tactic which was lurk underneath the floor until he was able to position himself right underneath his next target.

As Ketis momentarily stepped away in order to evade another round of attacks, her intuition suddenly screamed out in alarm!

Her life was under threat!

Time seemed to slow as her glowing sword had just cut through the neck of another elite soldier.

She discovered that all four giant battle suits aimed their shrapnel cannons right in her direction.

"Your own comrades are in the way!"

More pescan soldiers had come to suppress her, which gave Ketis the illusion that the aliens would still be reluctant to commit friendly fire.

The aliens turned out to be a lot more ruthless than she thought!

Though the pescans in the way were just starting to turn back and retreat, Ketis had no doubt that many of them would get implicated by this cruel attack!

The realization that four different shrapnel guns were about to flood the entire space around her with lethal shards of transphasic metal sent her blood pumping harder than ever.

She instantly moved to defend herself against this devastating strike before she even put conscious thought on her plan.

The swordmaster jumped back and withdrew as far away as possible in order to reduce the concentration of shards that might hit her body.

She then retreated towards a pile of prone alien bodies that just happened to belong to former elite soldiers.

She rapidly dropped her body behind one of the armored corpses. She had oriented herself in such a way that she lay prone on a perpendicular angle to the four giant battle suits, thereby minimizing the chance that she would get hit by the spread of shards.

However, if any of the metal projectiles did manage to hit her body, they were liable to punch through her frontal armor and damage her organs.

This was why she used the remaining time she had left to lift up a nearby alien body and placed it on top of her combat armor.

She then made sure to activate her personal energy shield to its most powerful state while resonating with the sword that she had pressed between herself and the armored alien corpse.

It was only then that the large and powerful giant battle suits fired their shrapnel cannons!

"MEEEEEOOOOW!"

The spread of shards were so great that one of them happened to hit Lucky's body, which not only caused significant damage to his slender form, but also flung his mechanical body far away!

Since the wearers or controllers of the battle suits focused solely on taking down the threatening human, a lot of shards propelled in the direction of Ketis.

Since she was not as small as a cat, her chances of getting struck were much higher!

Ketis gritted her teeth as the body she used as cover got hit over a dozen times!

Though the transphasic armor of the nearly intact but headless body absorbed many of the shards, a few of them cut straight through and rapidly depleted the personal energy shield generator that she had been using as a life-saving prop.

Its capacity was quite impressive due to being a product of high technology, but it had never been designed to resist so many strong attacks!

So many shards struck the energy shield at once despite the buffer of an alien body that it had finally broken!

"Ahh!"

Though much of the shards had lost steam by now, a few still managed to push through and inflicted severe damage onto Ketis' combat armor!

The borrowed combat armor gained several major holes as the shards embedded into the flesh of the swordmaster.

As soon as the momentary storm had passed, Ketis immediately threw aside the body and ripped out the three shards at rapid speed.

She just managed to pull them out in time to roll her body and evade a few laser beam attacks.

The violent motions didn't do her wounds any good!

Her damaged suit of combat armor struggled to plug the gaps and temporarily mend the wounds with emergency stopgap solutions.

Ketis actually grew impressed by how much functionality the Davutan combat armor retained after enduring a considerable amount of damage.

Though Ketis did not look tattered at the moment, her expression turned ugly now that she noticed that she became a lot more vulnerable to attacks.

If any pescan managed to score a hit on the holes in her torso and leg, the attacks were liable to inflict crippling damage!

This was the cruel reality of being a swordmaster. A mech could at least rely on large and resilient interiors to absorb a lot of damage without getting shut down entirely.

The human body was much more fragile!

It wouldn't be until she could become a sword saint that her body may be able to become a lot more resilient, but even then a decent mech could crush her with ease regardless of how much she strengthened her flesh and bones.

She heard that only a sword god could fully the might of a mech, but even then it was dubious whether such a human could resist the might of an ace mech, let alone a god mech!

Ketis groaned in pain as she retreated in a pathetic manner in order to prevent herself from getting hit by a second shrapnel cannon volley.

These alien mechanical monsters were too strong for her to fight against!

She deeply resented the fact that four oversized battle suits resisted her offensive and depleted her defenses.

She felt ashamed for scampering away like a coward.

Her feelings didn't matter, though. The pescan battle suits simply possessed too many advantages over her. She had a lot more confidence in beating them if she could isolate one of the large battle constructs, but that was not the case.

Should she just give up and circle around them? The powerful pescan tank was still intact and she was wasting far too much time on these machines.

"I can't do that."

Her pride and dignity as a swordmaster would suffer a heavy blow if she pulled back from this challenge.

While it was not unrecoverable, it would still leave an awful stain on her mental record.

Besides, as soon as these heavy combatants realized that they could no longer catch up to Ketis, they would probably move towards the main entrance and unleash their awesome might against the human forces who were least equipped to withstand so much power!

Ketis gritted her teeth as she hid behind cover that was distant enough to render the shrapnel cannons ineffective.

Many different plans coursed through her mind, but none of them sounded viable. The only ones that had the greatest hope of succeeding was by calling for support from the other human troops, but they already had their hands full with solving their own problems!

Chapter 4813 A Meeting Of Sword Wielders

When Ketis just became a Swordmaster after winning a dramatic victory in a tournament at the First Sword Arena, the locals embraced her as one of their own without hesitation!

It was quite a life-changing experience for a former pirate and Swordmaiden.

Back then, the Larkinson Clan had only recently come into power, and its fleet hadn't earned any glory by completing multiple successful expeditions.

Ketis only came across the traditions of the Heavensword Association a short time ago. She and her fellow Swordmasters only opted to visit the sword-obsessed state in order to take part in its famous Greater Omanderie Festival.

Everyone knew that despite opening the tournaments to foreign swordsmen, the ultimate finalists and victors would always be the powerful seeds fighting in the same of the Heavensword Association's famed sword schools!

It was a complete fluke for Ketis to experience a unique and unprecedented breakthrough under those circumstances.

If Ketis hadn't reached the threshold to Journeyman Mech Designer and if she hadn't received a remarkable sword-oriented companion spirit from Ves, she would have never been able to fulfill both of her ambitions at the same time!

When the Heavensworders realized what she had become, they completely accepted her identity and fully welcomed her into their community.

It felt nice for being appreciated for her strength, work and accomplishments. She hadn't been accustomed to attracting so much attention. It had always been Ves that wowed the crowds.

Though Ketis ultimately decided to decline the invitation to relocate to the Heavensword Association and start a promising new mech company and sword school within the second-rate state, she still became its citizen and accepted many of its benefits.

One of the perks of becoming a swordmaster was to meet with the leader of the state in person.

Ketis had heard much about the Heavensword Saint. As the only existence comparable to an ace pilot, the strongest swordsman of the state enjoyed absolute respect and obedience from every Heavensworder.

No matter what kind of personalities the swordmasters possessed, none dared to disobey the only individual that could unquestionably defeat them in a sword duel!

Ketis also experienced this mental suppression. Her pride and confidence in becoming a swordmaster quickly dulled the closer she came to meeting the best swordsman in the entire galaxy.

This was not an exaggeration. Even though the MTA deliberately suppressed the news and prevented it from becoming common knowledge, every citizen of the state believed with all of their hearts that the strongest human swordsman was the wielder of the legendary Heavensword!

As befitting to the meaning of 'heaven', the powerful sword saint preferred to reside in floating gardens that were situated high in the air.

When Ketis stepped out of her shuttle with her personal weapon being carried by a Heavensworder attendant, she strode into a garden and immediately felt at peace.

This was remarkable. The unrest in her heart along with the frenetic ideas generated by her active mind had put her in a persistent state of excitement since the moment she had broken through.

As a mech designer, becoming a Journeyman represented a new beginning!

Now that she had proven the viability of her design philosophy, she gained the qualifications to design more exceptional mechs.

She already had many ideas on how to design mechs that not only wielded sharper blades than anything she had designed before, but also imbued them with the knowledge and expertise she derived from being a swordmaster!

Such a mech was completely unprecedented in the mech community. Ketis did not fear that anyone else had designed such mechs before. The thought of being the first to design swordsman mechs that could allow its pilots to experience a fraction of the power of a swordmaster fueled her urge to head to a design lab and work on her projects straight away!

It was only after she had stepped into this idyllic garden that all of those urges and desires faded away.

panda -novel | com She could feel that she wasn't being suppressed by force. Ketis experienced Lufa's glow enough times to learn when her emotions were forcibly dampened.

The effect she experienced was more like entering a sanctuary where the concerns of the present no longer mattered anymore.

It felt as if she received the rewards that she had earned. A part of her wanted to do nothing more than to close her eyes and lay down on the grass in order to enjoy a wonderful rest.

Ketis did not get fooled. How could it be so easy for her to gain what she wanted? Having experienced many emotion-manipulating glows in the past, she could easily recognize that all of these feelings and impulses did not represent her true self.

It was highly uncharacteristic for her to give in to the bliss exerted by this environment. It was nothing more than an illusion that had no basis in reality!

She concentrated her mind and quietly recalled Sharpie from her greatsword.

As soon as her companion spirit returned home, she became larger than life. The strength of her willpower skyrocketed as her living sword intent helped her to resist this pervasive influence!

A clapping sound suddenly spread across the garden.

Though the pressure did not decrease, Ketis could clearly sense the appearance of a single individual.

In the meantime, the attendant who carried her greatsword had silently retreated, leaving behind the weapon which continued to float in the air with the help of its floating scabbard.

Ketis immediately recognized the white-bearded man.

The man's appearance was iconic and appeared on many banners and projections.

His elegant pale robe, his dignified white beard, his lean and athletic body and above all else his sheer gravitas made it clear that he was the strongest sword wielder currently alive!

Perhaps there were ace pilots and god pilots that somehow exceeded the Heavensword Saint in terms of swordsmanship skills, but they didn't really count because they were entangled with mechs.

Though Ketis didn't really understand the distinctions, the new friends she made among her peers had already taught her that there were fundamental differences between ace pilots and sword saints.

As the older man came close, Ketis felt more and more at peace. She understood that it wasn't just the saint who produced this effect.

A large part of the reason why this entire floating garden felt like heaven was because of the powerful weapon sheathed behind the sword saint's back!

Now that she noticed it, she wondered how she managed to overlook it. Her eyes briefly grew dizzy as she had the illusion that she managed to catch a glimpse of an entirely different world locked inside the weapon.

It was as if the legendary Heavensword captured a chunk of heaven inside its form!

A strong bond tied the Heavensword Saint and the legendary sword together. The strength of this bond exceeded that of the Larkinson Network and vastly surpassed that of the bond between Ketis and Sharpie!

Now that she had entered the sight of a sword saint, Ketis remembered the manners that she had recently learned and made a respectful bow.

There was no need for her to bow too low or prostrate before the ground. That would be an affront to her dignity as a swordmaster.

She merely tilted her head and body low enough to convey just enough respect towards the holder of the Heavensword.

"Sir."

The Heavensword Saint responded with a friendly nod and smile. "Swordmaster Ketis... of the Larkinson Clan. It is a pleasure to meet with you. Of the swordmasters that I have met before, your youth and exuberance stands out, and so do your sources of power. What you have done is impossible. Our state and people have never anticipated that a high-ranking mech designer can concurrently become a swordmaster. It does not take a close examination to conclude that you have relied on a special circumstance to break the rules."

"I... eh..."

The Heavensword Saint turned around and swished his elegant white robe. "No matter. You do not have to divulge your personal circumstances if you are unable or unwilling to share your story. We are not concerned with your history, your past deeds or your future intentions. Your conviction as a swordmaster tells us enough about you that we do not have to be concerned that you will not abuse your newfound powers and bring disgrace to our association."

Ketis relaxed a bit as she could feel the truth and goodwill in the older man's words.

"Thank you... the truth is that it is rather inconvenient for me to explain my double breakthroughs. It involves the clan that I am a part of. You should ask our patriarch for details if you want to know more."

"Understood. Thank you for sharing that, young woman. Your display of power at the First Sword Arena has turned many spectators into admirers. I anticipate that many of them wish to join your Larkinson Clan in order to follow you and learn from you. Please be generous to them and make them feel welcome. It is up to you to decide how many teachings you wish to pass on to them. It is my hope that they can reciprocate and teach you more about our ancient traditions. A brief visit to our state is not enough for you to understand the bottomless heritage that we have preserved for countless generations."

The Heavensworderesses possessed a lot of pride in their heritage and traditions. They talked about it constantly even though Ketis never really managed to obtain a history book that clearly explained the origins of traditional swordsmanship.

Oh well.

"Our clan always welcomes the addition of skilled mech pilots." Ketis generously replied. "Anyone who joins will have to pledge their loyalty to our clan, though. Our patriarch doesn't like it when people aren't serious about embracing the identity of a Larkinson."

"Understood. My people shall take that into account."

A brief silence ensued as Ketis and the Heavensword Saint continued to feel each other out with their extraordinary senses.

Although the heavenly aura still pressed onto Ketis' mind, her newfound strength as a swordmaster easily allowed her to resist its influence.

Anyone else who met the Heavensword Saint would not be able to keep their minds straight!

"Would you like to hold it?" The saint suddenly asked.

"Huh?"

"The Heavensword. Would you like to hold it in your hands? It is a unique experience to any swordmaster, and I have a hunch that your background as a swordmaster will grant you further gains from studying this relic."

Ketis couldn't believe how simple it was for her to get her hands on the weapon that literally named an entire second-rate state!

"I would love to hold your blade if you are okay with it." She said with remarkable patience even as every fiber in her being urged her to hurry up! "I can sense that it holds a lot of power. Is it... safe for me to hold this weapon?"

The old man's eyes turned grave.

"You are sharp enough to notice that. I have met numerous newly promoted swordmasters who have grown so unstable that they only see its might, not its thorns. Holding the Heavensword requires... a great amount of inner faith. If you do not believe in yourself, then you will get lost in power that does not belong to you. You will understand when you hold it yourself."

This caused Ketis to grow more vigilant, but not by much. She not only believed in herself, but also believed in Sharpie. Her companion spirit had changed her life and helped her transform her own willpower. What was a mere Heavensword in comparison to the wonder that occupied her mind?

The Heavensword Saint slowly unsheathed his weapon.

The pressure in the floating garden skyrocketed as the glowing weapon revealed its naked form to Ketis for the first time!

Its current wielder slowly drew out a blade that glowed with strong sacred power!

Just looking at it caused Ketis to develop the impulse to lower herself to her knees and worship this most magnificent relic that had ever been forged by a human smith!

"What... what a perfect sword!"

Chapter 4814 A Transcendant Sword

The Heavensword was a beautiful weapon.

Some fine weapons looked like nothing more than an average standard-issue product that could readily be picked up from a weapon rack.

Other weapons looked like they belonged in a gallery or a museum.

The Heavensword definitely fell into the latter category.

Many people used different words to encapsulate its beauty, appearance and presence.

The words sacred and heavenly were often used as descriptors.

In truth, no word could ever fully describe the majesty and the transcendent nature of this relic weapon.

The sword already looked ornate in its sheathed form. It possessed a white and sacred appearance and clearly looked as if it had survived through the ages.

There were many rumors flying around about the quality of the weapon.

Ketis could immediately recognize that it was at least a masterwork weapon, though it far surpassed any other masterwork that she had ever seen up to this point!

Just the act of pulling it out of its sheath completely changed the surrounding environment.

Even though the Heavensword Saint did his best to suppress the fluctuations of the mighty weapon, he was too weak to tame the enormous amount of energies locked inside its form.

Ketis widened her eyes when she realized that the Heavensword Saint wasn't as impressive as she previously thought.

Every swordmaster was a literal master of the sword. They could wield any sword and tame even the most unruly of blades.

Whether it was physical swords, electrified swords, plasma swords or more exotic sword types, a qualified swordmaster possessed the ability to harness all of them. Perhaps they needed a little time and practice to get a grip on the more advanced technological features of the weapons, but eventually they should be able to prevent their swords from going out of control.

Sword saints should be even better in this regard as they could not only wield every sword to a superhuman degree, but also change it by baptizing them with their willpower!

Just as how ace pilots were able to transform their ace mechs into stronger and more fitting machines over time, the more powerful sword saints should theoretically be able to do the same with their swords!

As the Heavensword Saint fully unsheathed the sword which granted him his current title, Ketis practically dropped her jaw when she realized the truth of the powerful swordsman state.

Ketis' thoughts turned into a mess of confusion even as Sharpie worked harder than ever to keep her mind sober. The Heavensword's dense and uncompromising domain constantly battered her mind and steadily drained her recently boosted willpower.

Just staring at the glowing blade of the Heavensword was enough to knock ordinary people unconscious!

"Sir... you..."

"Hm, you have noticed it, I see." The old man in robes gently replied. "You have picked up on it remarkably quickly. I see that your education and work experience as a mech designer is availing you well."

It took a few more seconds for Ketis to compose herself. "Your sword... the Heavensword... does not appear to be under your control. Instead, it looks the other way around. The Heavensword... has you under its thrall."

She had heard how the inheritors of the legendary Heavensword gave up their previous swords and the swordsmanship they had developed throughout their lives in order to take up the mantle of the Heavensword Saint.

Ketis thought that this was a chance of a lifetime to swordmasters. Anyone who obtained the blessing of the Heavensword would instantly break through to the rank of sword saint without exception!

The wielders of the Heavensword even mastered the right sword style to utilize this sword in combat as well, allowing them to use the sword as it was meant to be used.

She realized that all of the Heavensworders who spoke about this inheritance mechanism had been affected by a positive bias.

While their assumptions and expectations were not wrong, they were missing the darker side of this phenomenon.

A more complete and unflattering description of what went on was that the Heavensword had become so powerful that no swordmaster could ever tame its powerful and domineering essence.

"I used to be a fencer when I was a swordmaster." The Heavensword Saint spoke. "I wielded my fencing sword with precision and finesse. Those days are over now. I have not forgotten how to wield my old weapon, but I have lost the foundation that I built up over many decades that enabled me to strike faster and punch through any form of defense. The Heavensword does not need all of that. It demands a different wielder, one who performs slashes with force and one that constantly desires to spread heaven to the wider galaxy."

Those words sounded horrifying to a true sword practitioner like Ketis.

She understood what the saint was conveying. She could clearly see and feel how the bond between the man and his sword had turned into a demonic embrace that caused the weaker party to take on the traits of the stronger party.

In normal cases, it should have been the swordsman who imprinted his will and self onto his weapon.

Instead, the Heavensword's rich energies and whatever traits its original wielder passed on caused the blade to be so unshakeable that they transformed the subsequent holders without any other consideration!

This was a horrifying process and one that robbed any hard-working swordmaster of his or her life's work.

"Why?" Ketis asked.

"That is a long story. You should easily be able to guess many of the reasons with your intelligence. However, when it comes down to it, the Heavensword needs a wielder, and it is better for that person to be a vetted swordmaster than a tyrant who will get lost in its power. A weapon as ancient and powerful as this has many demands. If it is not satisfied, nobody knows what it will do. You can say that aside from preserving our ancient swordsmanship heritage, our state exists to contain its desires."

"Is the sword alive?"

"Not literally." The saint shook his head. "It is not alive in the same sense as people such as you and I. It is neither alive in the same way as your clan's impressive living mechs have come to life. This sword... is an echo of its original swordsman. That individual was so powerful that for many generations since his passing, his undying imprint is much more powerful than many swordmasters put together."

Ketis could not even imagine how powerful that individual may have been!

None of the living mechs that she was familiar with had ever come close to being able to do this much.

She eyed the Heavensword's hilt with considerable dread. Would holding it turn her into another 'clone' of the first-generation wielder of this cursed weapon?

"I mean no harm to you, young swordmaster." The Heavensword Saint said, and Ketis could feel his sincerity in his words. "I have already satisfied the demands of the Heavensword. It is much more docile when it is content. Take it with confidence. It will not bite. At most, it will test you to verify whether you are worthy enough to even hold it. That should not be an issue from what my men and I have observed."

She did not sense any malice from the start of this meeting. The Heavensword was oppressive and demanded her to submit to it as if it was a god, but it respected her refusal on account of her mental fortitude.

Seeing that the situation did not look too fishy, Ketis slowly approached and lifted up her arm.

The weapon was ancient.

That was the first impression she received when she initially held the blade.

From the metal to the materials that made up its hilt, Ketis could more clearly feel the immense traces of time that had marked the sword.

The second aspect about the sword that she noticed was that she underestimated the extraordinary power contained in this sword.

There were entire facets about the Heavensword that radically altered her impression of how much damage it could do when it was utilized to its full potential.

She looked at the glowing blade in shock.

Despite the rather compact dimensions of this sword, she felt that she could destroy an entire capital ship with a swing of this weapon!

She could split a city in half and permanently rearrange the landscape of an entire planet if she had the strength to channel its vast power long enough!

"There's a huge pool of energy locked inside this sword!" She exclaimed as her hand tried to maintain a firm grip on the weapon. "This... this is unheard of. Whoever forged this blade is incredible."

"You are most likely correct." The Heavensword Saint spoke. "According to the sparse sources that we have left, the Heavensword was ostensibly created by a god."

Now that the latest inheritor of the relic had let go of it, his presence had softened considerably. He seemed almost human now that he no longer held the source of much of his acquired strength.

Ketis paused at the mention of a certain word.

Having only recently exited the Nyxian Gap rather recently, the word had a negative connotation to her and many Larkinsons.

"A... god?"

"No mortal hands or sterile machine has forged this blade, do you not agree? You are a maker of swords as well as a wielder of one. You should be able to judge the veracity of this claim yourself."

Ketis took a deeper look at the sword and studied all of its details and nuances.

The materials were absolutely indecipherable to her. She recognized none of the metals used in the alloys.

The quality of the weapon was impeccable. Having worked alongside Gloriana on numerous projects, Ketis had developed a good eye for quality, but the sublimeness of the Heavensword clearly surpassed any of the masterworks that she had witnessed before.

The difference in quality was too massive. Whoever forged this weapon not only mastered his craft to the best of what humanity today could match, but also seemed to push his sword smithing ability to a level beyond this impressive height!

Although Ketis had far too little clues to decipher the identity and the details of the maker of the Heavensword, her deep analysis of this ancient and historical relic allowed her to discover another important detail.

It was one that actually caused her to shake her arm and almost lose her grip on the incomparably precious weapon.

"The Heavensword... is not a masterwork." She whispered. "I know what masterworks are like. Although this sword resembles them a lot, its fundamental qualities are not on the same level at all. I hadn't been able to realize the truth before because it feels oddly lethargic in this aspect, but this is no masterwork. It is a qualitatively greater sword, one that completely transcends what masterworks are supposed to be. If I am not wrong... this may be the best sword in the possession of humanity!"

panda -nove| , com Her entire mind was blown by this realization!

The Heavensword Saint did not deny her assertion. "You have learned a truth that few have learned. Not a single new swordmaster who I have invited to hold this sword has ever been able to make this distinction. Again, your background as a mech designer has made you far more capable than a typical swordmaster. Properly speaking, the Heavensword is indeed more than a masterwork. According to the classification used by the Mech Trade Association, it is more appropriate to describe it as a grand work."

A grand work.

A legendary creation that Ketis had only learned about a relatively short time ago. Grand works were the kind of objects that only Star Designers get to create!

Just the thought that she was holding the work of a swordsmith who was comparable to a Star Designer made her feel as if she was already staining the Heavensword by holding it in her hand.

Though the weapon itself did not mind her grip, Ketis couldn't help but feel that she was not yet worthy to hold such an incredible fine work.

Her vision of what swords could become had changed forever this day.

Chapter 4815 Timeless

Holding the Heavensword was literally the opportunity of a lifetime to Ketis.

Who could ever claim to have seen a grand work up close, let alone touching it with his or her bare skin?

The newly advanced swordmaster deeply realized that this honor and privilege would have unimaginable benefits to her future work.

Ketis had never handled such high-level swords in the past. Her vision was much more modest due to spending a long time working with humble third-class mechs and swords.

Though she knew that her double advancement along with her new connections to the Heavensword Association would help her elevate her work, her impression of what she could produce at her limit had always been vague and insubstantial.

Not anymore.

From the moment she held a grand work of unsurpassed quality and power, Ketis gained a much clearer idea on what skills and abilities she needed to acquire to make her own swords of unsurpassed might and capability!

Though she wanted to study the Heavensword for a while longer, she noticed that her willpower was not able to protect her from getting tainted by the massive degree of extraordinary power it contained.

Even when the Heavensword had entered into a dormant state where its activity levels were low, the grand work couldn't help but affect the environment and everyone inside it. Such power was impossible to contain.

Ketis knew enough about her craft to know that the reason why the Heavensword did not completely possess the majesty of a grand work was due to other factors.

As she continued to hold the weapon, she had the impression that it used to be a lot grander in the past, but that it suffered a lot of damage that caused it to fall back into a crippled state.

She could not fathom how it was possible to damage such a transcendent work of craftsmanship.

The Heavensword completely defied ordinary standards. Its toughness was off the charts as its material properties could not be formulated by any production machine in existence today!

She spent a little more thought on examining the huge pool of energy that powered its remarkable state and enhanced its lethality to an insanely high level.

The ubiquitous energy contained within the pool was completely uniform and reminded Ketis a lot of its current wielder and the blissful floating garden environment.

This... heavenly energy was completely different from all of the other energies that Ketis had tangled with before in the Larkinson Clan.

Ketis imagined that if she was able to harness this energy and master it to the highest degree, she could literally create a heaven where the dead could go and enjoy paradise.

She could also harness this energy to create a slice of heaven in normal space. Each swing of the blade would allow her to bring down heaven's mercy or wrath depending on her intentions!

"Amazing." She gasped as she learned all that she could of this extremely potent type of energy.

Unfortunately, the heavenly energy that saturated the grand work proved to be too dangerous and corrosive to Ketis.

She had been unable to determine all of the details about the massive energy pool and how she could create a smaller version of it for her own swords.

Her expression worsened as she forced herself to return the Heavensword to its rightful wielder.

The pressure it exerted on her mind had faded by a considerable margin, but the loss of the Heavensword also caused her to feel a gaping hole in her heart.

She shook her head and utilized Sharpie to cleanse any sequelae the Heavensword had inadvertently left behind during their moments of contact.

The saint had sheathed his legendary weapon by now, causing the surrounding air to become a lot more pleasant.

"Thank you... for letting me experience this great and wonderful sword." Ketis sincerely said to the leader of the Heavensword Association. "I have learned a lot today. My visit to your state has given me far more gains than I could have hoped."

"It is my pleasure, young woman. Your love for swords is genuine and your talents should not remain buried in the galactic rim. Our people and our state expect much from you. With your talents and experiences, you are destined to soar into the heavens. Even the Heavensword holds this opinion."

"Are you sure about that, sir?" Ketis responded with a skeptical expression. "When I held your weapon, I constantly felt it was testing me and judging me. It bared its own state to me, but it did not do so without making sure I was good enough to behold its excellence."

"Trust me, Ketis, the Heavensword would have made its displeasure known if you were less than worthy."

"I see. Can I ask you a question, sir?"

"You may do so. That is one of the purposes of this meeting. We do not want anyone to remark that a swordmaster who successfully inherited our traditions is completely ignorant of what we do and what we stand for. You are a citizen of our state. Do not forget that, Swordmaster Ketis."

She smiled. A burst of warmth had sprung in her heart. Though she would always be a Swordmaiden and a Larkinson first, she did not mind getting adopted by another group of people.

The premise was that her loyalties never clashed one day.

The woman turned her attention back to the question that bothered her the most at the moment.

"According to my observations, the Heavensword... is in a crippled state." She stated the truth as she saw it. "I truly do not know how powerful grand works ought to be, but this is not it. The sword barely looks better than a masterwork on the surface, but this is impossible. Whoever forged this weapon was a true talent in the art of swordsmithing. Such an impressive sword maker would not limit himself and his work to this level."

The Heavensword Saint let out an expressive sigh. "The full story is clouded and lost in myth. The short version of its story is that the Heavensword is too old. It has outlived its wielder and the eras where it was meant to be used. Much has changed. We live in a time where mechs and sophisticated technology have become humanity's latest talismans. The inheritors of the weapon all proved to be too weak and inadequate to make use of it. They suffered early deaths as they proved incapable of wielding such a powerful relic."

Ketis wanted to learn more details, but the Heavensword Saint exhibited great restraint in the face of her repeated inquiries.

She could only conclude that at the time of its making, the Heavensword relied on a powerful energy source or a unique resource to power its prodigious might.

Everything was fine as long as the Heavensword's immense hunger was sated, but as the years went by, humanity's circumstances changed in a drastic manner that completely toppled the old paradigms.

The Heavensword no longer enjoyed the luxurious treatment it received before. Without obtaining the sustenance it needed to utilize its slice of heaven to the fullest, it could do little but to enter into an emergency low maintenance state.

Its demand for sustenance had dropped dramatically, but that also led to its current lethargic state.

"The Heavensword is sleeping!"

"Correct." The saint replied. "It is one of the reasons why it is still able to exist for so long. There are sources in our library that tell of the existence of many more legendary swords and weapons. All of them are lost, and none of them were lucky enough to be able to replicate the survival and self-defensive tactics employed by the Heavensword. Many unique and priceless swords that once enriched our race have never been able to go down on the battlefield as they were meant to, but instead crumbled to dust as they failed to resist the corrosion of time and the changing of the eras."

A chill ran through Ketis' spine. She tried to imagine what would become of her works one day. Would her greatsword and her mechs crumble helplessly over time as well?

Her mass production works would probably get used and recycled within a generation or two, but her better and more premium works should last considerably longer.

Mechs could not last forever. It took extreme care and maintenance to keep them intact. Most people simply did not have the money or the desire to keep around old and outdated mechs.

Swords were easier to maintain and continued to hold their value in the long term as long as they were good enough.

Ketis could easily imagine her best swords becoming prized relics in a couple of generations from now. Even if she had improved her techniques and transitioned to forging first-class swords, her older works should still hold a lot of practical and historical value among many different people.

It became exponentially less likely that her premium works would stick around for longer than that. Technology and cost no longer became the deciding factors anymore.

The only variable that mattered was whether enough people cared about her old works to preserve them over time.

Ketis could not even recall off the top of her head if she had ever viewed a work that had been made more than a millenia ago. She simply didn't care to visit the old and stuffy museums that showcased the swords, rifles and other gadgets that humans made use of several thousand years ago. They had little to no impact on her life in the modern day.

When she learned from Ves, she also acquired his forward-thinking perspective. Rather than looking back and remaining stuck in the past, she would rather look forward and work towards a more prosperous future!

Yet even she couldn't foresee what would happen to her work after several millennia had gone by. It was likely that she would have long passed away by then. Her family and friends would have entered the grave as well, which meant that the amount of people who still remembered who she was on a personal basis would no longer be around anymore.

Only the greatest and most impactful works had the qualifications to be preserved by the descendants of today's generation of humans.

Ketis shifted her eyes towards the Heavensword which had already returned to its sheath.

Even though Ketis and everyone else knew nothing about its maker and possess scant little clues about its wielder, a sword as exceptional as this had forcibly managed to survive an uncountable amount of ages by virtue of its astounding power and craftsmanship alone!

For a moment, Ketis understood why Gloriana obsessed so much about chasing after perfection and maximizing the quality of her mechs.

It was because raising the quality to a transcendent level was the most straightforward way to ensure that her works would shed their temporal status and gain a more timeless property.

They became immortal.

She developed a new ambition at this time. Her exposure to the Heavensword did not generate the desire to gain possession of this magnificent grand work herself.

As powerful and exquisite as this ancient relic may be, her swordsmanship diverged too much from its original wielder.

What she wanted to do instead was to forge a grand work that was fully suitable to wielded by herself!

As a mech designer and an engineer, Ketis understood deeply that only a custom job would suit her best!

This way, she could also ensure that if she ever created such a powerful artifact, she could fully harness its might instead of allowing the domineering weapon to control its own wielder.

The more Ketis thought about forging an eternal blade, the more her passion and excitement amplified her will and desire!

She had a much more concrete idea on how to go forward now. She bowed deeper in front of the Heavensword Saint or rather the ancient weapon itself in gratitude.

"Thank you... for showing me what swords can truly become." She said with utter sincerity in her voice. "While I can't promise I will ever become good enough to forge a younger brother or sister in my lifetime, I will do my damned best to make it so that humans can still create timeless weapons such as yourself!"

For a moment, the Heavensword rattled in its sheath. Powerful light shone from the blade and transformed into a ball of heavenly light.

This ball hovered over the heads of both sword practitioners before it sank into Ketis' body!

Chapter 4816 Lacking Swords

"What was that, sir?!" Ketis uttered with shock.

As an experienced warrior who encountered many strange phenomena in recent years, she possessed a considerable degree of vigilance towards odd stuff entering her body.

Who knew whether the Heavensword implanted her with a bomb or tried to assimilate her mind into becoming its slave!

Ketis feared that the Heavensword had taken such a liking to her that it had designated her as its future successor!

If this old fellow croaked in the future, would the Heavensword compel her to return to this state and force her to take up the mantle of the Heavensword Saint?

What if she refused? Would that ball of energy corrode her until she bent to the ancient relic's irresistible will?

"You do not need to fear the Heavensword." Its current wielder reassured Ketis. "It bears no malice to you. The inheritance process is always voluntary. As a sword that has been held by more swordsmen than we can ever count, there are many valid candidates. Some are more worthy than others to become its next holder. There are also swordmasters that have admired the Heavensword from the first time they started their swordsmanship practice. They have taken to wielding replicas of this weapon that closely approximates its physical properties."

"Do these 'fans' ever get to fulfill their dreams?" Ketis curiously asked.

"It does not happen often. It is the sword that ultimately chooses its wielder. A chosen swordmaster can refuse, but few ever do. It is difficult to resist the temptation, and it undoubtedly a great responsibility to placate this temperamental weapon. Giving up their swords and swordsmanship is a painful but noble sacrifice. The finest citizens of our state are not timid people by nature. We love our state too much to shirk this necessary burden. Aside from that, who among us hasn't developed a measure of arrogance? If we are capable enough, we can always fulfill our people's lifelong dream of subduing the Heavensword and take full control over it. This will not only allow its new master

to become a sword saint in truth, but also attain a level of strength that humanity has never reached in modern times."

Ketis widened her eyes as she took in the implications of the Heavensword Saint's words.

She assumed that her ambitions were already outrageous enough, but it turned out that other swordsmen also pursued impossible goals!

In an age where the best sword practitioners could only become swordmasters at best without relying on a cheat like the Heavensword, it was unthinkable for anyone to become a sword god!

The gulf was too vast!

Ketis took another good look at the Heavensword Saint. She understood that the man deliberately wore a pale robe and adopted such a gentle and grandfatherly demeanor because that would help him increase his compatibility with the powerful weapon.

What if the Heavensword was not as righteous?

What if it possessed a demonic character?

Would all of its wielders be forced to become demons themselves in order to earn its approval?

She had so many questions that she didn't even know where to begin.

Ketis did not mind it that she knew so little. All of this showed that there was much more depth to swords and their relation to their wielders than she initially thought.

Her attempts to seek answers to all of those deep and profound questions would definitely enrich her methods and bring her closer to forging a grand work comparable to the Heavensword one day!

However, there was one matter that could not wait. She needed an answer right away to give her piece of mind.

What the hell was that white ball of energy?! Why did it enter her body and why couldn't she find any trace of it when it had escaped her sight?!

Sharpie carefully examined her entire body and mind but found no trace of that powerful energy. This was incredibly confusing as the power of the Heavensword was too distinctive to blend into the background!

The saint attempted to reassure her. "The Heavensword provided you with a gift. I can assure you that it will not harm you or influence you in any fashion. Think about it, Ketis. A sword that has existed for such a long time and has been paired with thousands of swordsmen has no reason to target you specifically. Its sights are set too high."

"If that is the case, then why bother giving me a gift at all? For what reason did this powerful weapon grant me a gift?"

The saint fell silent for a moment. "The Heavensword approves of your yearning to create more powerful swords. It too hopes that you can dispel its loneliness one day and help revive our ancient heritage. If we want to restore traditional swordsmanship to its former glory, then we must not only train the best sword practitioners, but also equip them with the best swords. Our state has made constant strides to improve in the former, but our progress in the latter has stalled."

Ketis looked puzzled. "Why so? I have only visited this state for a short time, but I have learned that blacksmiths are flourishing just as much as swordmasters. Shouldn't there be a lot of master smiths under your rule who can forge masterwork weapons for your swordmasters?"

The Heavensword Saint drooped. "The matter is more complicated than you think. Master smiths are not as impressive as you think. Their skill in forging weapons is impressive, and each of them have mastered unique skills and methods that allow them to create swords with the right properties. Although they can forge masterwork swords from time to time, these blades lack... brilliance."

"Brilliance?"

"It is difficult for us to describe what we mean by that." The saint explained. "Maybe it is easier to use the phrase 'activating factor' instead. We have made many comparisons between the Heavensword and the swords forged by master smiths. Our conclusion is that no matter how much effort they have put into their life's work, the results always fall short of our expectations. There are two probable reasons why this is the case. The first is that we do not have access to the appropriate materials anymore. The second is that our master smiths simply are not qualified."

Ketis did not have any clue about the issue of materials, but she had a few suspicions about the human factor.

"Do you believe I can do better than the master smiths of your state?"

"I do." The saint smiled in response. "My confidence comes from the Heavensword. Do not underestimate its judgment. It is one of the oldest surviving human relics in the history of our race. It has lived through many eras and witnessed many changes in history. No matter what we think about it, the current times are called the Age of Mechs for good reasons. Mechs are in the ascendancy now, and it is fitting for the weapon to bet on a mech designer. For it to bestow a gift to you shows that it is slightly optimistic about your ability to reach the level of its maker. In any case, it does not do this relic much harm by passing on a fraction of its power."

The saint sounded as if the Heavensword was an ancient human sage that occasionally handed out gifts and words of wisdom to the distant descendants of his race.

"Shouldn't the Heavensword look to invest in the Master Mech Designers of your state, sir? I recall that the Heavensword Association has the highest concentration of swordsman mech specialists among Masters in the Majestic Teal Star Sector."

"We have tried. We have tried many times but failed to obtain the results we have desired. Do you know why? It is because they are mech designers first and sword smiths second. Their best and proudest works are always mechs, not the swords that are paired with them. While it cannot be denied that their swordsman mech designs are truly exquisite, the more they concentrate on the mechanical, the more they lose sight of the sword. It is a contradiction that cannot be solved unless the Master Mech Designers in question can satisfy a single condition."

This time, it did not take much guessing for Ketis to guess the answer.

"You mean advancing to Star Designer."

"Correct. Star Designers are no longer bound by categories. If they can design the finest mechs, it is logical to assume they can also forge the finest swords. Our Masters are working hard to fulfill this

lifelong dream, but... you should know better than I how probable it is for them to make any further breakthroughs."

The amount of Star Designers was extremely scarce, and the majority of them emerged from the MTA and first-rate states.

Ketis understood now why the Heavensword did not have much hope in the craftsmen and mech designers of the state that carried its name.

"Do you think I have a better chance than your domestic mech designers?"

"You have more advantages than the others." The old man calmly replied. "Let me put it in the following terms. If the chance that any of our Masters can advance is 0.001 percent, then yours should at least be 0.01 percent. That is enough of a reason to be optimistic about your chances."

Those probabilities sounded exaggaratingly low, but it was a rough reflection of how few Star Designers existed relative to the amount of Master Mech Designers alive today. The rate of breakthroughs was abysmally low.

"I appreciate your vote of confidence." Ketis sardonically said. "Although I like to make good swords as much as any Heavensworder, I think I should mention that I am not much different from your mech designers. Before we can do anything else, we must learn how to excel in designing mechs."

"We do not presume to dictate how you choose to practice your craft. The citizenship that we have bestowed upon you does not come with any strings attached. We only wish to enrich your understanding of our state and our purpose so that you can think about assisting us once you have attained more success later in your life. Perhaps your unique circumstances allow you to create the swords we need much sooner than we think. There is no need to wait until you have advanced to Star Designer. Becoming a Master Mech Designer ought to be enough. Combined with the abilities of a sword saint, your works shall vastly exceed what our best Masters can produce."

That... was an inspiring thought. Ketis did not think about it before, but now that she examined this scenario, she understood how the synergies between the two could allow her to surpass the efforts of any single Master Mech Designer!

"I can see what you mean, sir, but... as impressive as that sounds, I do not think I will be able to make swords of grand work quality at that stage. I would have to master technology to a far greater degree to come close to that point."

pandanovel "You misunderstand my argument, young woman. What we seek in a sword is not necessarily a grand work, but a weapon that can help our swordmasters break through and become sword saints. They are not necessarily the same."

That sounded a lot more reasonable. Though Ketis had no idea what she would be capable of if she ever became a Master Mech Designer, she actually possessed a bit of confidence that she might be able to address the Heavensword Association's greatest need at that time!

"I won't make any promises, but I am not in the habit of turning my back on my friends." She eventually said. "I also want your people to succeed. I have met so many swordmasters lately that it

would be tragic if they could no longer go any further because their swords can't keep up with them any longer."

"That is more than enough, Swordmaster Ketis."

Chapter 4817 Gift From Heaven

The meeting between the newly promoted female swordmaster and the leader of a state soon came to a close.

The two had talked long enough and the former increasingly found it difficult to maintain her sense of self in an area that was fully under the domain of the most powerful sword she had ever encountered.

"Before I go, you haven't answered my question yet. What did the Heavensword gift to me? That ball of light is not nothing. I will never feel comfortable knowing that I am carrying a bomb that has hidden so deep inside of me that I can't even find a trace."

The Heavensword Saint understood her concerns. "It is not simple to describe the gift that you have received. If I have to describe it in the simplest possible terms, what you have gained is potential."

"You mean potential energy?"

"Not in the traditional meaning of this scientific concept." The old man responded. "It is more than that. Think of the name of the sword behind my back. What do you think it represents?"

"...Heaven."

"Precisely. You are now carrying a tiny parcel of its potential."

That did not clarify much to Ketis. The information content was too low.

"What can I do with this heaven-based potential energy?" She flatly asked.

"Anything that heaven can produce." The saint responded with a mysterious expression. "The power of the Heavensword is manifesting heaven. I cannot be too concrete about it because to describe it in fixed terms is a disservice to the concept of heaven that the weapon stands behind. It is an all-powerful force that can produce infinite possibilities."

"It... can do anything?"

pαndα -nove| , com The old man nodded. "It is exactly because it can do anything that it has managed to survive so many ages. Killing is only one of its purposes. It can also create anything as long as its wielder is powerful enough. I am sorry that I am far from qualified to demonstrate this power."

The Heavensword Association had always been vague about this matter. Nobody would believe that a single sword could create anything its wielder imagined.

This was not a power that could be produced with pure technology anymore.

This was the power of a god!

"I really don't understand why the MTA hasn't claimed the Heavensword for itself." She muttered.

Her idle remark produced a response from the Heavensword. It rattled in its sheath. It was as if the very thought made it angry!

"Do you see what the Heavensword thinks about that idea? It does not want to be controlled by those who worship mechs as opposed to swords."

"Doesn't the MTA have the power to take the Heavensword by force?"

"It does." The saint readily acknowledged. "Yet what then? This is a sword that even god pilots struggle to contain, and that is not an exaggeration. Do you think that it is worth their time and effort to contain an unwilling weapon? They have more important responsibilities to take care of. Besides, they respect the Heavensword too much to be willing to do any harm to it. No matter what, this is one of the oldest surviving remnants of human history. It may hold ideas and stances that are incompatible to modern human society, but when it comes down to it, this relic is still on our side. Compared to the immense damage that it can do should the mechs anger it in any way, it is much more harmless to let it be and allow our state to indulge in its desires."

"..."

Ketis did not know what to say about that. It sounded as if the Heavensword had successfully blackmailed the all-powerful Mech Trade Association into leaving it alone.

It was so hard to believe that a weapon as powerful as this ultimately ended up in a state located at the outer edge of the galactic rim. Shouldn't it be placed in a big museum in the galactic center?

If the Heavensword was this powerful, then the claim that it could create anything became a little more plausible.

She revised her estimation of the power of a grand work. It turned out that products like the Heavensword were much scarier than she thought!

"What a day." Ketis eventually remarked. "I always thought that swords could be much stronger than what I could currently make, but this goes beyond ordinary production."

This distance between her current state and the level of the creator of the Heavensword was so great that a weaker mech designer would have fallen into despair!

It was fortunate that Ketis did not fall into this category.

By the time she exited the floating garden, her willpower surged as she became inspired by everything that she learned.

As for that odd ball of energy that the Heavensword had planted inside her body? She already sensed that the Heavensword directed no malice towards her. The reassurances of the Heavensword Saint successfully addressed her concerns and allowed her to meet her new future with confidence.

"Before you leave, there is one more matter." The old man said. "For obvious reasons, you must keep the contents of this conversation a secret. It is not convenient to allow others to know about the greater capabilities of the Heavensword or let it be known that it is a grand work."

"I understand, sir, but... I am just a mech designer and a swordmaster. If anyone powerful enough tries to interrogate me with the help of advanced technology, I cannot guarantee that I will be able to protect these secrets."

"The Heavensword has already taken the necessary precautions. You do not need to fear anything. That is one of the boons bestowed by the gift of heaven."

Though Ketis had no idea what that meant in concrete terms, she accepted the statement. The Heavensword had already displayed a lot of reality defying abilities. One more feat was not outrageous.

She completely forgot about it after a few years. The gift from the Heavensword had done nothing at all for her, and she never really fell into a circumstance where she needed a boost from a magical sword in order to fulfill her goals.

Even now when she had just survived four shrapnel cannon blasts from a quartet of giant alien battle suits, she still did not think about calling upon this latent power.

This was because her pride and honor as a swordmaster only allowed her to rely on herself to fight her way out of an adverse circumstance.

Now that Ketis had retreated far away enough to minimize the probability of getting hit by the deadly transphasic shrapnel fired by the pescans, she quickly took stock of her awful state.

Her personal shield generator had exhausted its charge. This was a painful loss as it had served as her most reliable safety net for years.

Her armor's functionality had dropped due to all of the shards of metal that had managed to penetrate its exterior.

The loss of protection was already bad enough. What was worse was that the attack had also damaged important servos, power lines, circuitry, life support systems and more.

If not for the fact that the suit quickly activated emergency measures that plugged the gaps with temporary sealing materials, Ketis would have been forced to breathe the slightly toxic air circulating inside this prison facility by this time!

"It hurts..."

Becoming a swordmaster did not make her a lot more resilient. The puncture wounds inflicted by the metal shards had affected her body as well. It was only due to the emergency treatments of her combat armor along with the resilience provided by her genetically modified flesh that she managed to retain her combat effectiveness.

Even so, she was no longer able to move around and attack as heartily as before.

This was the difference between humans and mechs. The former had never really evolved with pure combat in mind, while the latter were always purpose built for war!

"Lucky! How are you doing?!"

"Meooowww..."

She had seen Lucky getting hit as well. His ability to resist damage was not low, but he still had trouble resisting the penetrating attacks of transphasic weapons fire.

Though Lucky looked as if he could still put up a good fight, the cat had clearly seen better days!

As Ketis forced herself to stay on the move in order to avoid the encirclement of the angry pescan soldiers, she occasionally found herself forced to exert her injured body in order to chop apart the enemies that dared to stand in her way!

Each time she took another alien life and stained her glowing blade with alien blood, she briefly sensed the emotions of her soon-to-be-deceased victims.

They feared the humans that had come and robbed them of almost everything they ever knew.

Yet their fury towards the extragalactic invaders exceeded every other emotion.

Not all of them fought with self-preservation in mind. Ketis encountered plenty of aliens who had been driven to such despair that they wanted to go down in a final blaze of glory!

As a powerful swordmaster who dared to rampage behind enemy lines, the pescans had designated her as one of humanity's great champions. They would rather keep the four giant battle suits away from the most critical location of the battlefield in order to contain the human woman who fought with nothing else but a sword!

"I need a transphasic gun." She muttered to herself.

There were swordmasters who dedicated themselves so much to the sword that they disavowed every other weapon.

Ketis was not that kind of swordmaster.

She did not eschew the utility of firearms. It was only because of the conditions of the founding ceremony that she had neglected to bring one. It wouldn't have been of much use anyway because she hadn't upgraded her guns in years.

If she was ever able to make it out of this place, she would definitely seek to acquire the best possible pistol that she could carry around!

She needed to learn from Ves how he managed to perform that handy trick of materializing his laser pistol from thin air.

Better yet, she wanted to apply this property to her Bloodsinger. This way, she would never be removed from the weapon of her choosing!

The importance of a good weapon became especially obvious after she encountered a pair of elite pescan soldiers.

She dashed forward without fear and thrust her borrowed sword into the neck of the taller alien!

Due to her adversary's height, she had to extend her reach a lot further than normal.

Her injuries along with the reduced performance of her suit had caused her to pull off this common move a little slower than before.

It just so happened that her target was able to move away fast enough for the sword to scrape against the breastplate!

The thick transphasic armor easily resisted the attack. The sword thrust had only left a shallow mark behind!

"Damn!"

The elite soldier could not shoot her with his cannons from this range, but he could still use his strong limbs to batter her aside!

She barely managed to avoid getting thrown onto the floor by pushing her body behind her limits. She winced as she experienced several spikes of pain.

Despite her blunder, she still managed to jump aside before the other pescan soldier fired his twin laser arm cannons and chopped at a vulnerable knee joint.

"Reeeeruuaaa!"

The alien in question screamed in pain as he lost his footing! Ketis easily managed to finish the job by jabbing her sword through the injured soldier's neck.

More blood stained her glowing blade, but quickly flew away as Ketis attacked the other elite soldier!

Another spray of blood flew into the air as Ketis easily got rid of her remaining immediate opponent.

She had lost count of how many pescans she killed. They had to be more than a hundred she guessed, but with all of that hardly seemed to make a difference as alien reinforcements constantly arrived.

Sure, many of them consisted of conscripted civilians that possessed little combat acumen, but just raising their arm cannons and shooting in the direction of any humans within sight required hardly any training!

"This can't go on!" Ketis recognized.

The human side could easily defeat the masses of alien cannon fodder. It was the elites and the more powerful alien assets such as the giant battle suits and the half-crippled tank that truly needed to be dealt with, but without heavy weapons or favorable terrain, that sounded like a distant dream!

Ketis felt more and more helpless in this situation. She did not know how many trump cards Ves had left. Even though he was notorious for having a lot of tricks up his sleeve, even he should have been caught off-guard by the mass abductions.

She believed that the only person that could change the tide was herself!

Chapter 4818 The Ultimate Cut

She was not a religious person by nature, but when she thought about whether her son could survive this event or whether Joshua would become a widower after this day, her heart started to sink.

Swordmasters normally did not lose confidence, but as an intelligent mech designer, she maintained a much clearer head than the battle maniacs who easily lost their situational awareness.

Though she did not possess a complete overview of the battlefield, she could see and hear enough from her vantage position that the human forces at the main entrance were beginning to lose momentum!

The brave Davutan guard forces regularly cried out in pain or agony, showing that the withering pescan suppression fire was rapidly taking a toll on their ranks.

Several honor guards had already perished and the remaining ones were hopelessly trying to do the work of a hundred soldiers.

The humans trapped in this pocket space had too few numbers, too little equipment, not enough supplies and too few pieces of quality gear.

"We can't win this battle without help!"

A real swordmaster would have had a much harder time admitting any form of weakness, but Ketis also differed in that sense.

After acknowledging that she did not have the power to alter the unfavorable circumstances of her side by herself, she became a lot more open to the idea of calling for help.

She initially thought about reaching out to the powerful design spirits that Ves regularly worked with. She then became stumped by the question on how she could call upon the power of these distant entities.

Ves made it look so easy. Ketis knew that it was a manifestation of his talent.

Joshua possessed a similar ability. The two men were so alike that they could have been comrades in arms if one of them ended up becoming a mech pilot.

She had learned from the both of them that it was easy for them to make contact with the design spirits.

If she wanted to do the same, then she just needed to pray to them and form some sort of connection.

However, Ketis was much different from Ves and Joshua. Their similar domains made them especially suitable for communication and cooperation. They were like warm and gentle spring breezes that anyone would like to embrace.

Ketis on the other hand possessed the typical exclusionary force of will that guarded the sanctity of her fundamental self. She was like a naked blade that cut whoever came too close.

She failed in her attempt. She understood that she would never be able to replicate her husband and her mentor's abilities.

"The only area that I am good at is pursuing greater sharpness."

For all of the time she spent on dabbling with other sword styles, she had never slacked off when it came to her personal sword style and techniques.

She had originally broken through because she wanted her sword to gain the ability to cut through anything.

Laughter escaped from her lips. "I'm not a good swordmaster. I became distracted by too much irrelevant stuff."

Instead of thinking about all of these useless matters, it was better for her to put all of her thoughts aside and focus solely on trying to cut through the barriers that stood in the way of her goals!

At this time, the four giant battle suits had grown tired of waiting for her attacks.

Under the escort of numerous pescan soldiers, these giants had turned around and steadily began to march towards the contested main entrance, making sure to keep the crippled tank within sight in order to repel any approaching saboteurs.

The goal of this siege breaking unit was clear. They were being sent to sweep aside the main opposition!

Ketis couldn't allow them to reach the entrance and get close enough to sweep all of the human troopers with their devastating shrapnel cannons!

Once the humans holding onto the main entrance were repelled, nothing Ketis could do on this floor would matter anymore!

Her eyes turned crazed as the optical sensors of her suit locked onto the four metal giants that represented the pinnacle of pescan battle suit development.

Their awfully slow traversal speeds was their only major weakness, and bought precious time for Ketis to get her act together.

Still, the energy and physical defenses of these four super suits were excessively high. Ketis had never even managed to scratch their armor. She first needed to breach their transphasic energy shields, but she had already discovered that she lacked the raw power to penetrate them in quick succession.

"Hahahaha!" She laughed again. "Why am I discouraging myself? I should be doing the opposite! If I don't believe in my strength anymore, what qualifications do I have to advance to a sword saint?"

The word 'impossible' shouldn't exist in her vocabulary!

Her willpower condensed even further as she set aside the parts of herself that was a mech designer and fully embraced her identity as a swordmaster.

The time for calculations and technical analysis was over.

Only a miracle could help her defeat her current foes. She needed to put all of her faith in the infinite power of a swordmaster.

Ketis resonated stronger than ever with Sharpie. The companion spirit started to integrate more deeply into the weapon, causing its edge to take on a considerably deadlier sheen.

Its ability to cut had been strengthened!

Although the logical part of her mind told her that her blade still wasn't sharp enough to cut through four powerful transphasic energy shields at once, her swordmaster persona yearned to resist this reality and produce a different outcome!

She stood up straighter as her resonance with her sword seemed to inject steel in her body.

Her injuries no longer affected her as much while her combat armor did not produce as many hindrances as before.

Every other concern or distraction faded away as she only set her sights on her immediate goal.

The distractions of battle faded away and many pescan soldiers faded from her awareness as she prepared to launch an attack.

"This is my only chance."

Her sword started to vibrate under the influence of her overwhelming desire to amplify its sharpness.

A high-pitched keening sound escaped from it. Anyone who looked at this sword and heard this special sound would know that its ability to cut through matter had reached a considerably higher level than before!

Whether this was enough, Ketis couldn't care anymore.

Her armored hand tightened its grip on the hilt as she accumulated her strength and willpower.

Once she had reached a threshold, she exploded out of her cover and charged forward at much greater speed than before!

She ignored the pescan soldiers along her path. Her unrelenting march seemed to have caught them off-guard. She easily evaded their attempts to land their attacks on advancing form.

Even though her combat armor possessed several holes that were only plugged by thin sealing materials, Ketis showed no fear against these attacks!

Her hyperconcentrated state had elevated her intuition and reaction speed to a new height, allowing her to weave and dance through the laser beams and projectile attacks as if she was able to read them a second or two in advance!

By the time the aliens realized they missed their shots, Ketis had already closed the distance to her targets!

The wind did not even whip at her armored shape as her true resonance seemed to cut through the air itself.

Not even air resistance could slow her down!

The sluggish but highly threatening giant battle suits had picked up on her advance.

The elite pescan champions who wore these monstrosities had always been on guard against her attacks.

Two of them had already started to turn around. Due to the peculiarities of their construction, they did not need to rotate 180 degrees in order to blast Ketis with their shrapnel cannons and other armaments.

It was already enough for them to turn 90 degrees to bring at least one of their cannons to bear against the swordmaster!

In order to ensure that these immense suits turned around in time, they unveiled a capability that they had kept hidden up to this point.

Powerful boosters mounted on their backs flared to life, causing the two repositioning giant battle suits to gain a considerable increase in their turning speeds!

Ketis' eyes minutely widened as she realized her life had come under enormous threat.

The aliens had laid a trap for her! They anticipated that she would make a last-ditch effort to attack the aliens.

It was one thing to get struck by the shrapnel cannons when she had been able to retreat in time.

It was another thing to get blasted by them when she was almost in point-blank range to these enormous guns!

Ketis faced an immediate test at this junction.

She could either repeat her previous actions and seek to preserve her life, or she could set aside her will to live in order to strengthen her will to cut!

In any other instance, she would have opted for the former choice.

At this moment of extreme focus and conviction, she chose to remain unyielding against adversity and deepened her determination to cut through everything!

"If you launch those shards at me, then I shall cut them into pieces!" She roared!

Her blade edge grew even sharper and deadlier as her declaration strengthened her true resonance by another notch!

As the distance rapidly reduced, Ketis had already begun to swing her keening sword in a wide horizontal arc.

She did not employ the Phase Cutter ability that she previously utilized to break down the integrity of the transphasic energy shields in her way.

As effective as this technique may be when employed against transphasic defenses, it was ultimately a technique developed by Venerable Dise. She was the only one who could employ it to its fullest potential.

Ketis possessed her own sword style and fighting approach. Her obsession with sharpness caused her to focus on this aspect and nothing else.

This ultimately caused her to launch the sharpest and most cutting attack that she had ever launched!

Even though the borrowed sword in her hand was not as sharp as her Bloodsinger under ordinary circumstances, the immense resonance amplified its cutting power to an insane degree!

The sword sang a loud and beautiful note as it cut through the air like the drop of a guillotine!

At the same time, two of the battle suits had spun on their axis quickly enough to fire at least one of their shrapnel cannons each.

Loud booms escaped from their muzzles as dozens of sharp and jagged pieces of precious transphasic metal flooded the surrounding space!

Many of them were bound to punch through Ketis' combat armor. It did not even matter if she could somehow intercept a couple of them with her sword. There were more than enough shards that could slip past her blade and strike her exposed body regardless!

However, Ketis did not think about all of that anymore.

She mustered up whatever willpower she had left and committed all of it towards her next attack!

"CUT!"

A blindingly white flash engulfed the entire floor!

Several loud and destructive sounds propagated through the busy battlefield. Both humans and aliens faltered in their attacks as they tried to regain their wits and figure out what just happened.

Silence descended in the immediate area where Ketis had just unleashed her entire potential to launch her sharpest attack to date.

The pescans around this site expected to see an armored human champion that was embedded with ugly metal shards.

What they saw instead looked so incredulous that the pescans could not accept their initial impressions.

All four powerful transphasic energy shields had been blasted apart. Not a single shred of them existed anymore as the earlier attack appeared to have breached them at the same time!

The giant battle suits were in a state that looked just as poor.

Ketis' sword slash had not just cut a neat and surgical horizontal line on one of the formidable suits.

Instead, she somehow managed to cut through all four of them at the same time!

That wasn't even the most outrageous part of what had happened.

The damage she inflicted on them was not limited to thin and surgical cuts.

Instead, at least a meter of solid matter had disappeared entirely!

It was as if Ketis' sword had irrevocably wiped a chunk of all of the transphasic armor plating, complex alien machinery and organic pescan matter out of existence!

The story wasn't over yet. The incredible sword slash she unleashed just a moment ago affected more than just her immediate foes.

Many more pescans and other obstacles further behind also exhibited the same fatal injuries!

Some of the pescans had lost so much of their bodies that only their heads along with their legs were left intact!

Everything else had been cut clean from existence by Ketis' ultimate attack!

A quick visual inspection allowed Ketis to conclude that she had easily cut the bodies of over a hundred pescan combat in an instant!

This... was impossible.

It wasn't until she shifted her gaze to her sword arm that she realized the truth.

Instead of holding the sword she had borrowed from an honor guard, she wielded an entirely different weapon at the moment!

The iconic shape and heft immediately sparked recognition in Ketis.

"What?!"

The Heavensword had somehow managed to cross the galaxies and directly substituted her previous weapon!

As she miraculously resonated with this transcendent blade, she could clearly sense that it was not a replica or a manifested phantom construct.

Having held the legendary sword several years before, Ketis knew without a shadow of a doubt that it was the real thing!

Just the enormous pool of heavenly energy buried deep inside this blade alone was enough to dispel any alternate possibilities!

It became increasingly clearer to the swordmaster that a slice of heaven had fallen into her hands!

Chapter 4819 Descent

The sword slash unleashed by Ketis did more than cut through a bunch of transphasic energy shields.

After she removed all of her distracting thoughts, ignored irrelevant environmental factors and squeezed out all of her latent potential, the strike she produced not only incorporated her best techniques and theories on force application, but also cut on a deeper and more conceptual level than before.

Ketis felt as if she had entered a dream.

The attack produced by leveraging of the strength Ketis had left in a profound act of desperation had shocked all of the combatants into silence!

After a small and unnaturally strong delay, everything that she had cut collapsed.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Thousands of dismembered parts and pieces of debris simultaneously fell onto the floor.

An enormous amount of blood spilled from all of the severed body parts. The transphasic stone floor became drenched with hundreds of organic red patterns. Anyone who looked down onto this floor from above would be able to appreciate a unique work of art that could only be produced in the most exceptional combat scenarios.

No art would ever be able to reproduce this unique and shocking display of transcendent power!

"What... happened?"

Not just everyone else, but the swordmaster herself grew confused at what had happened.

She had worked hard over the years to develop the ultimate cut. Just like Venerable Dise, she became increasingly more burdened by the increasing demand of coming up with a means of breaking through transphasic defenses.

The easiest way to do that was by using transphasic weapons, but that was a luxury only reserved for the rich.

As a swordmaster and a mech designer, Ketis despised the easy solution of resorting to expensive gear to solve her problems.

The most admirable way to overcome transphasic defenses was by relying on ingenuity to overcome the need for expensive transphasic weapons.

This was a steep challenge and one that caused many Master Mech Designers to slam into a wall.

Ketis also experienced her setbacks, but she never faltered in her goal.

The success of Venerable Dise had given her an enormous amount of encouragement.

Even so, the Phase Cutter technique had only reached a rudimentary stage. Summoning a river of stars that could corrode transphasic defenses over time could hardly be called a true cut.

It also did not match Ketis' personal style.

This was why she kept working on trying to refine her own technique. She wanted to fully leverage her advantage in sharpness to develop a way to cut through all of the dimensional nonsense of phasewater!

In other words, she wanted to create a sword technique that not only allowed her blade through the material dimensions, but also cut through anything important in the higher dimensions!

Ketis wasn't supposed to succeed at this time.

She recalled that she was far from completing this technique. There was still an enormous gap between theory and her desired result.

Just wishing really hard that she could cut through all of the transphasic defenses in her next attack was not enough to make it happen.

Ketis was not that powerful.

The only possible explanation why she was able to burst with power far in excess to what she contained was the weapon that currently graced her armored hand.

Even if she wasn't able to hold the hilt with her naked palm, she recognized the heft and feel of the Heavensword as if she held it only yesterday.

As the strongest and most reality-defying sword she had ever come in touch with, the legendary relic from a past age could not be mistaken for any other blade.

The previous sword she used to kill a lot of pescan opponents was like an unpretentious knight. It was a brave, combat-oriented product that could reliably cut what it was designed to fight against. The nameless blade could endure a lot of abuse and would not easily falter after a day of heavy fighting.

The Bloodsinger that originally came to life as a CFA service weapon issued by the Starlight Megalodon was like a duke that had earned a lot of victories and continually expanded his domain. Ketis or more precisely Sharpie had attuned with it for many years, causing her to become familiar with every single nuance.

Compared to the two weapons that she had forged herself, the Heavensword was like an emperor that ruled an entire planet! Its boundless might and its endless potential were barely contained in an old but solid form of a white and spotless sword. Holding it was like holding a part of the authority of all of reality!

Was this what it was like to be an omnipotent god?

The power was intoxicating!

If Ketis hadn't reaffirmed her conviction and sharpened her willpower to the point where it had become stronger and more resilient, she would have gotten lost in the rush of wielding such a mighty blade!

Where did the Heavensword come from? The last she heard, the legendary sword should still be in the possession of the Heavensword Saint!

Despite the man's age, the sword saint was still in decently good health. Wielding the Heavensword exacted a toll on the wielder's life, but it was not an excessively cruel weapon.

There was no way the Heavensworders would ever agree to transfer their greatest heirloom to the Red Ocean. Its symbolic value alone was indispensable to the state that carried its name.

Aside from that, the Mech Trade Association would never permit the powerful and unrestrained grand work to enter the shark pool that was the new frontier.

The damage it could do whenever the Heavensword followed its own whims were minimal and inconsequential in a marginal region like the outer borders of the galactic rim.

The story was much different in the Red Ocean!

The dwarf galaxy was much more compressed compared to a proper galaxy like the Milky Way. The distances between the lower zones, middle zones and upper zones were much shorter.

Humanity only captured a small slice of the Red Ocean so far, so there was an exceptionally high concentration of pioneers in occupied human territory.

The chances that the Heavensword would get exposed to all kinds of powerful and ambitious people and organizations were much higher if it ended up in the Red Ocean!

Given all of these factors, Ketis immediately ruled out the possibility that the Heavensworders had brought their precious relic through the greater beyonder gate.

The only explanation that made sense was that the Heavensword appeared in the Red Ocean on its own initiative!

What was even more impressive was that it had probably appeared in an instant!

From the moment Ketis initiated her ultimate cut technique, she still recalled that she held her previous blade.

That meant that the Heavensword chose to descend in her hands while her blade was just about to cut through the transphasic energy shields!

This capacity far exceeded anything humanity could reproduce through the technology it had mastered!

As Ketis held the Heavensword, she sensed that the weapon had taken the initiative to open itself up to her. She gained a rudimentary amount of authority and comprehension of its long list of abilities.

One of the abilities that its creator imbued in the weapon was the option to teleport to its wielder or anyone that received its heavenly gift!

It was at this time that Ketis finally recalled the odd ball of heavenly energy that the ancient sword had bestowed upon her during her visit to the Heavensword Association.

Now that the Heavensword had appeared in such a high-minded manner, Ketis could finally sense the gift in her body.

She could sense that it had been hiding inside her heart all of this time!

It had not been staying idle all of this time.

The Heavensword took the initiative to explain to her that the ball of energy had accompanied her for several years. Her strong will and emotions steadily caused it to become more familiar with her presence.

In other words, she imparted it with her imprint, thereby making it more compatible with her. If this did not happen, the ball of extremely high-quality energy would have assimilated her by force and transformed her into the next successor of the Heavensword Saint!

Ketis was very grateful that the Heavensword did not override her swordsmanship.

The goal of imparting this ball of energy was to monitor her and maybe learn from her activities.

The mark of the Heavensword also assessed whether she was worthy enough for the Heavensword to intervene when her life came under threat.

The weapon did not explain its judging criteria to her, but obviously Ketis had managed to prove that she had earned its approval!

Of course, that was not enough. The Heavensword was too powerful. Rashly using it in combat would do more harm than good.

If Ketis' willpower wasn't firm enough, then forcibly swinging the grand work would cause her force of will to crumble into mist and her body to explode due to an inability to contain so much power!

Only through stimulating all of her willpower and emotions did she manage to activate it somehow, causing it to be drawn out of its hiding spot and active a predetermined routine.

This ball of energy was the principal reason why the Heavensword was able to bridge over a hundred-thousand light-years and instantly appear in her hands.

The ball of energy also helped her harness the sword. As a grand work that contained an immeasurable amount of might, Ketis had no qualifications to wield the Heavensword in battle!

It was only because the Heavensword took measures to reduce its requirements, supply its own energy demands and exert the power of heaven on her behalf that she managed to unleash a gigantic blade of sword energy earlier!

Unfortunately for Ketis, the Heavensword could not be used without limit.

The more she exerted its power, the more the ball of heavenly energy depleted itself.

Ketis was not the Heavensword Saint, let alone a sword saint. Once her borrowed energy reserve ran out, she no longer possessed the qualifications to exert the Heavensword's power!

According to her current estimates, she could only wield the Heavensword for a couple of minutes at most.

"That is enough!"

Though Ketis still reinforced her body with the sharpness of her own domain, the overwhelming aura of the Heavensword had flooded the entire floor and several more besides!

The version of heaven propagated by this ancient relic was not impartial. It could be as comfortable as paradise or as judgemental as divine punishment depending on the individual.

To the humans who had previously been fighting against the aliens, the aura not only granted them bliss, but also lifted their exhaustion and even healed their lighter injuries!

To the aliens that sought to beat down the humans that resisted their own captivity, the Heavensword oppressed their will and made them feel guilty for spilling human blood!

While the pescan soldiers were still caught off-guard by the dramatic developments that had just taken place, Ketis reaffirmed her desire to demolish all of the aliens and resonated harder with the Heavensword!

At this time, the Heavensword had allowed Sharpie to enter a shallow layer of its deep and unimaginably vast internal space.

Although Sharpie was too weak to influence the Heavensword, her visitation at least enabled Ketis to resonate with the overbearing weapon on a superficial basis!

This was enough.

She grinned under her helmet.

She bent her knees and lowered her stance.

With the power of heaven covering her body and armor, she feared no attack!

Ketis even believed that had become as powerful as a mech at this time!

This was just a fraction of the strength of a top swordsman!

Every second she became exposed to the Heavensword's incredible power and ingenious energy transformation allowed her to learn a lot about the mechanics of this transcendent weapon.

However, she only spared a tiny part of herself on these observations. She could store all of the data she recorded today and revisit them at a later date when she was not preoccupied with other matters.

Right now, she had a battle to win!

Now that she had taken stock of her current condition, she no longer held back any longer.

With a powerful explosion of force, her body turned into a blazing white comet as she dashed her body forward!

An instant later, the crippled transphasic tank that the pescans desperately attempted to repair under the cover of their soldiers parted in half!

Ketis had reached the other side of the tank. The Heavensword glowed with solidified light even as a wake consisting of shards of metallic components trailed after the heaven-blessed swordmaster.

The mighty alien war vehicle did not stand a chance!

"Heaven shall punish the wicked!" She declared!

Chapter 4820 Heavenly Powers

Though the power that Ketis wielded was overwhelming, she barely managed to get a handle on it. The Heavensword in her hand was far too profound and powerful to be harnessed that easily!

However, if nothing else, Ketis could always keep it simple.

A sword slash remained a sword slash.

The biggest difference between slashing the Heavensword and slashing a more normal blade was that the former always produced a gigantic sword energy wave!

It was as if the Heavensword was a pressure valve that let loose a destructive burst of sacred energy that smited all of the foes that Ketis designated as her enemies!

Though the sword alluded to her that one of its many helpful properties was that it could distinguish between friend and foe, Ketis did not dare to test this ability.

It didn't matter too much. She was surrounded by pescans! It was easy to pick a direction and get close enough to her opponents to wipe many of them out at once!

Her incredible display of might and enormous light show did not go unnoticed.

She had quickly alarmed the pescans to such a degree that they began to fire their weapons at her with massed attacks.

None of the attacks went through!

Ketis fearlessly met the barrage of laser beams, kinetic projectiles and occasionally explosive warheads without flinching a single time.

Even the transphasic weapons wielded by the elite pescan soldiers failed to make any headway into breaking the heavenly barrier generated by the Heavensword!

This left her free to concentrate on her attacks!

"My blade shall sweep you away!"

WOOSH!

With such a dense crowd of pescans, Ketis wanted to reduce her numbers as much as possible!

This was why she unleashed a slash in every direction that produced wider but less concentrated sword energy waves.

Despite the reduced penetration power of these energy attacks, their width and range had become at least twice as greater!

It was as if a punishing hurricane had engulfed the pescans. No matter whether they were in cover or not, when Ketis slashed the Heavensword in their direction, nobody was able to maintain their footing!

Structures, armor and flesh became struck by all-encompassing heavenly energy that inflicted both physical, heat and more exotic forms of damage, all at the same time!

The only pescans that could resist such might were the elite pescan soldiers who happened to be situated far away.

Instead of getting riddled with burning holes, their heavy forms had merely been swept aside while much of their transphasic armor plating had been rendered useless.

After Ketis had swept in each direction, she loosely estimated that she managed to kill over 300 pescans outright, while inflicting severe injuries to at least 300 more!

"Reeeiiaaa!"

"Ruueencaaa!"

"Uuuuuuwawa!"

Ketis drove the pescans mad with the immense power she displayed!

The aliens had never witnessed anything like it before. They had a basic understanding of the strength of human mechs, but they never expected that a single infantry-scale champion could fight like one of their awe-inspiring gods!

Almost every native alien in the Red Ocean had learned that it was blasphemy to challenge a god.

Right now, more and more of them believed that Ketis was actually a human god that had come down in person to punish them for their aggression towards the human race!

The strangest part was that the manifestations that Ketis displayed in her current form did not match the descriptions of what gods were supposed to be like, but these differences hardly mattered when her power was just as overwhelming!

Ketis demonstrated her capacity to fight like one of the native gods in so many different ways. From generating an impenetrable barrier to accelerating herself to extreme speeds, she was like a miniature phase whale that utilized weird techniques to inflict mass devastation!

Many of the aliens became so oppressed by the 'godly' displays of the Heavensword and the fall of so many of their comrades that they dropped onto their knees and gave up all resistance!

Other aliens became more incensed and started to attack Ketis even harder in an attempt to overwhelm her defenses!

Ketis knew that one of the best ways to judge a group of people was to observe their reactions when they had been pushed to the brink.

As far as the pescan race was concerned, their people were rather average. They did not entirely lose heart, but they did not possess remarkable resilience either.

Only a minority of their leaders and officers displayed much higher faith and conviction. It was through these key individuals that the pescan combatants maintained a measure of cohesion!

It was all useless to Ketis. Her might was too strong and her proficiency in wielding the Heavensword slowly improved.

When groups of pescans took shelter behind a stack of transphasic energy shields, Ketis took one contemptuous look at them before slashing the Heavensword in a decisive slash!

"Cut!"

Her willpower wasn't strong enough to shape the output of the Heavensword's sword energy attacks. However, with the relic weapon's permission, she was able to 'pilot' the sword by passing on her intentions and instructions.

The sword decided how to channel its boundless energy into useful attacks.

Ketis paid close attention to how the Heavensword interpreted her latest attack.

She could sense through her active connection with the sword that it took out a dash of heavenly energy and compressed it in a reasonably thin blade.

Although the Heavensword was able to concentrate the energy quite a bit, it did not really excel in this aspect.

Heaven possessed infinite possibilities, but it took a huge amount of strength and control in order to harness the greater possibilities of the Heavensword!

Without an effective wielder, the Heavensword only compressed its sword energy into a relatively thick pancake and called it a day.

That did not mean that Ketis dismissed this rough technique. She could see that the Heavensword also performed a more profound operation.

It molded the sword energy to the point where it began to do what Ketis had always tried to produce through her own sword techniques but never really succeeded in practice.

The Heavensword extended its lethal edge into the higher dimensions, and not just a couple of them. The grand work was able to affect hundreds if not thousands of separate dimensions, each of which possessed their own unique strengths and properties!

The implications of this became obvious when the gigantic sword energy crescent struck the layered transphasic energy shields and cut through the solid barriers where the pescan soldiers sought to resist the incoming storm.

None of these defenses lasted more than an instant as the overbearing sword energy attack cut through both their material and higher-dimensional matter like a hot knife through butter!

It was exactly because the Heavensword inflicted fatal blows onto the higher-dimensional phenomena produced by phasewater that the transphasic defenses collapsed with ease!

Normally, Ketis wouldn't have been able to sense or observe any of this, but the Heavensword empowered her perception and comprehension to such an insane degree that she could clearly perceive all of this phenomena taking place!

Ketis had gained the vision of a god!

The insights she harvested from this brief exposure was immensely valuable. It had always been hard to advance her theories on the more metaphysical and esoteric subject matters.

In addition to that, she hadn't been enjoying her studies on phasewater theory that much. Transphasic tech was the latest major trend in the mech community, so she was obliged to understand how it worked.

Now that she could see all of the difficult theoretical subject matters happening with her own expanded senses, her comprehension of phasewater theory experienced several major breakthroughs in the span of just a few seconds!

"So that is how it is!" Her eyes shone with divine comprehension. "Phasewater's material properties aren't all that important. What truly matters is how it expresses itself in the higher dimensions. If I want to damage it effectively, I don't have to destroy its manifestations in those very same dimensions by relying on brute force. I can use more efficient methods to disrupt all of that higher-dimensional stuff."

Phasewater's visual form was just the tip of the iceberg. Its true depth was much greater and more difficult to describe.

However, the 'ice' underneath the waterline wasn't all that solid. It was a lot more fragile and ephemeral than Ketis expected.

By applying clever and ingenious methods, she could theoretically come up with the tech or sword techniques that could weaken transphasic defenses to such an extent that she could cut through them with a regular blade!

In fact, this was sort of the basis of Venerable Dise's Phase Cutter technique, but it was far too flawed and rudimentary.

Though Venerable Dise was able to produce the desired result, she did so by relying far too much on her force of will and true resonance to fill up the huge gaps and transform failure into success!

Although Ketis could not replicate the exact methods employed by the Heavensword, she could still collect a lot of hints and use them to refine her own applications.

"I have an idea."

She resonated with the Heavensword and tried to induce the sword to shape its heavenly energy into a vibrating saw.

The principle behind this was to destabilize the powerful sword energy to the point where parts of it spilled over into the higher dimensions!

Even if this happened only momentarily, the constant vibrations meant that the sword energy effectively touched a lot of random dimensions in quick succession!

When Ketis swung the mighty Heavensword again, the gigantic sword energy attack it unleashed upon a cluster of reinforcing pescans vibrated at such a high frequency that it began to produce a high-pitched noise!

"Sing for me, Heavensword!"

The sword itself vibrated at a similar frequency while she held it in her armored hand, causing it to produce a noise on its own!

Ketis gleefully watched as the vibrating sword energy attack overcame the transphasic defenses with ease.

Although it seemed as if there was no difference from before, the exuberant swordmaster could clearly sense that the vibrations produced a real effect!

If the Heavensword relied more on brute force to break through the strong defenses, now it had depended more on finesse to achieve the same result!

The sword energy retained its strength at a much better rate as a consequence.

The sweeping horizontal attack not only broke through a lot of energy shields and hardware while killing dozens of pescan soldiers, but managed to retain enough strength to keep going!

More and more aliens, structures, defenses and other obstacles got cut from waist height as the sword energy attack just kept going!

It wasn't until the vibrating attack had reached the other side of the open hall that it finally ran out of juice.

Yet before the sword energy finally dissipated, the vibrating attack drilled through the transphasic stone wall that every assumed was impervious to almost all forms of damage.

"Five meters!"

The Heavensword managed to cut through five meters of solid transphasic matter!

This was a profound feat, especially for the aliens. They knew more than anyone else how difficult it was to drill through strong walls that were expressly designed to contain powerful phase lords.

The fact that Ketis managed to cut through them with so much ease further amplified the defending side's belief that she was a powerful sword goddess!

Now that she had managed to learn the crucial knack of this method, Ketis grinned even wider underneath her helmet.

Her killing efficiency had skyrocketed now that she discovered the power of vibrations!

The Heavensword buzzed even louder under her deliberate manipulations. She had become excited beyond words.

The aliens that still remained coherent shivered as the Heavensword's aura conveyed her predatory intent.

"As punishment for your crimes against humanity, I shall allow you to become my practice targets for the prototypical form of my latest technique!"

Ketis went absolutely wild! She flew across the contested floor like a missile and unleashed so many vibrating sword energy attacks that nothing remained intact after her intervention!