

Chapter 3 - Electrical Grid

Floating mechanical eyes hovered around the area, where a holographic scan enveloped the area, with three eyes pointed at Soma.

“Divine Domain detected - Proceeding with appropriate parameters to eliminate Threat Class : Deity.” the automaton spoke, with a more robotic tone.

Soma advanced towards the automaton which changed from his usual laid back stance to a more refined, composed form.

Soma pointed his sword at the automaton, where the floating rifles all shot orange energy shots, which broke some plates off the giant and burned stalagmites to ash.

Cyrus pulled the trigger on his gun which shot the same purple energy from his new gun. The shot was deflected by the right arm and the purple energy bounced at the cavern walls, which exploded and rocks fell towards the giant.

Smoke and dust enveloped it, which the two were relieved. However, that relief was cut short as many chains with spear tips pierced the cavern, where four of them grazed Soma in multiple places. Soma stood there bleeding and felt pain.

“Wait, is this divini-” Soma said before being interrupted as he just barely parried a swing from the giant sword, deflecting the hit to the side in order to not get crushed.

The automaton charged purple energy from its right arm and slammed the floor. Metallic spikes rose from the ground that trailed towards Cyrus, which did not give him time to react. Soma appeared in front of him and for a split second he twirled his sword around and after doing a downward slash to the side, all of the spikes were shattered in an instant.

The automaton raised its right arm and gathered the oncoming debris and purple electricity ignited the ores in the debris, which formed an iron blade. Soma sped towards it, guns blazing, while the center of the automaton’s torso glowed purple and used the remaining debris and threw them straight at Soma, which took the appearance of knives. The rifles then charged giant shots, where they all shot bullets that pierced through the armor of the automaton.

Soma’s floating rifles shattered like glass, which he let out a “tsk” and there appeared an ornate spear which he used like an impassable fan to deflect the debris. The spear after its use also shattered. Some knives managed to get through and cut Soma some more on his arms, torso and legs. Soma bit his lip to contain his voice as he charged straight towards the giant. He jumped straight for the chest and materialized golden gauntlets, which he used to punch it, emitting a large flame and shattering said gauntlets in an instant. The automaton lost balance and fell over, not being able to move. Soma stood on top of it, as he inspected the head.

“Avogadro..huh?” Soma said as he glared at the motionless construct.

As he summoned three floating guns once more and prepared to pierce the head. Soma was then grabbed in the face by the right arm that recently disconnected from its weapon as it slammed him to the ground numerous times, which did not give him a chance to focus and shoot it off. He let out a groan of anger and pain as he repeatedly attempted to cut the arm apart. However, to Soma's surprise, the arm kept regenerating and somehow gaining strength as it kept holding on to him.

Two portals appeared in between the arms in which a singular purple bullet constantly pierced the arm. Soma was released from the grasp as the regeneration was not able to keep up.

“Good job Cyrus!” Soma yelled at the boy who had his gun pointed into another portal.

Suddenly, a purple being made of electricity jumped out of the construct, magnetizing nearby ores towards its whole body, which after an electric shock turned into a refined suit of armor with two blades. Soma and Cyrus went into close combat with the automaton, closely parrying the bladed hits that it caused. Soma used a katana to parry its hits, while Cyrus used a shortsword to redirect the momentum. The automaton released more mechanical eyes that pointed at the two of them, charging lasers. However, they were repelled by Soma's floating guns and Cyrus' portals and the two managed to pierce the chest of the being.

Immediately it raised its right arm towards the ceiling in which lightning crashed into the whole cave. Cyrus was knocked down due to the impact of a lightning strike next to him. Soma rushed to him prepared to protect the boy with his wings but as he did so, he was met with a steel fist inches away from his face.

The young God was knocked backwards, restrained by a metallic claw that kept him on the ground. He witnessed the suit of armor let go of the weapon in its right arm and grab him with the electric tendril.

“Death Domain....Gaps...Of...The Reaper....” Cyrus said as he made a last struggle where his gun was pointed at the chest. As he pulled the trigger, the suit of armor let him go and purple energy bounced from within. The final impact was sent to the head and pierced the metallic head as it expelled the electric being from the armor.

Soma then threw a spear he materialized and teleported on it as it pierced the chest of the electrical being. He sent a flurry of attacks on it as the spear broke over and over, being replaced every three hits. Soma then took out another set of golden gauntlets that once again shattered after one clean flaming punch.

“Domain Activated : Electrical Grid” the automaton spoke as it charged up an electrical blast. Electrical tendrils pierced along the cavern area. Cyrus on the other hand went into an infinite loop and propelled himself towards the automaton. As he was flung by the momentum, he shot multiple bullets at the automaton from multiple angles. The portals caused the shots to go into infinite loops on multiple areas, shattering pieces of the automaton. Cyrus finished off by shooting the automaton in the chest as he used a portal to soften his landing due to the momentum, where he rolled across the cavern floor.

Soma then took flight and grabbed from the upper torso with his right arm, burning it in several flaming bursts. He then threw it into the air, opened his palm to reveal a small sun-like ball of fire and clenched it as he gave it one clean punch. The punch had a trail of fire as it made contact with its head, sending the automaton to the ceiling of the cave, immobilized. Soma sent three broadswords towards it as it made one last struggle to fight back. Only to be met by Soma standing directly below it, pointing with his right arm in a finger gun gesture.

“Bang” he said as a concentrated blast of orange energy pierced the chest of the automaton.

“Fulfill....Purpose.....Termination....Of...Life...” The automaton said, as it flickered on and off, revealing its electrical exterior is over additional mechanical parts.

After the fight, the two inspected the remains, to which Cyrus was puzzled by such a foreign object.

“What...Was that?” Cyrus said, as he stood there terrified and confused.

“An automaton, a highly advanced one at that. It was sent here to capture or kill you.” Soma said as he looked down at the remains when they came down from the ceiling.

“It didn’t seem like an ordinary construct. It had some kind of artificial soul, I’ve never seen it before.” Cyrus responded, to which Soma said nothing about it and took a deep breath to relax his facial muscles.

“Anyways, you better stay safe from here on out Young Cyrus, train hard, who knows when these things or anything down in the Asphodel will hunt you down.” Soma said with a somewhat brighter tone with a clear warning in his voice.

Cyrus nodded and Soma flicked his forehead. “Defending the Asphodel is now your job. Be strong and be brave. The Oni and all the denizens need a Prince to guide them, after all you will take your dad’s place in the future.” Soma said, to ease the tension.

“I’ll use what you’ve taught me, thank you so much Soma.” Cyrus said with a grin as he embraced his brother figure, saying goodbye to the young God.

Soma approached the boundary between the Underworld and the Surface and he touched it with his right hand, which sent ripples around the barrier. Cyrus waved at Soma as the God walked through. He glanced back at Cyrus’ direction one last time but he already disappeared, with a trace of the purple portal disappearing at the last second. A steady flow of yellow energy left Soma and formed a magatama. The stone had stored the moving energy inside, it was half full. “I assume that must be faith, the way it’s contained looks similar to Lady Amaterasu.” Soma thought and walked onward.

After some time, Soma reached a lush garden filled with beautiful flowers and plants that never bloomed in the depths below, surrounding the entrance of the cave. There seemed to be a few

furniture sets, but it seemed empty now. Leaving the luscious cavern, he witnessed the Sun's rays. He then took a deep breath and trekked forward. "I haven't seen the sun in thousands of years." Soma said to himself. He eventually came across a road and a sign that read "Clockwork City".

Soma took out a scroll from his pocket, where he had notes from the time Amaterasu spoke with him. "This should be the City." Soma thought as he curled the map and put it away. Soma saw from a distance, Clockwork City. Metallic walls surrounded the city with gears that turned in every direction. There also seemed to be a dome shaped barrier that surrounded it, where the only entrance was up ahead on the path Soma walked upon. Soma took a deep breath and thought "Well, let's do this! Time to live my new life on the Surface." Soma said with determination and walked towards the city entrance.

Meanwhile, back at the torii gate, the presumed dead automaton sparked, with its electric soul struggling to remain intact. A shadow loomed over it where the automaton stopped moving, only to be dragged away.

"Sending your progeny to the Surface." the mysterious entity spoke, the automaton stopped its struggle and let that being take it away.

"You bring a threat to Our Cause, Amaterasu."