

Fee

1.

The vast room pulsed.

From every sheer glistening inner surface of the cuboid a multitude of colours of every shade emitted from tens of thousands of devices, all interconnected; the huge room essentially functioning as a multi-faceted and immensely powerful device¹. It used this structure for it's reprehensible purposes, never leaving, but somehow always everywhere, always seeking and extracting the precious data that it craved².

And every time she returned here she felt it, that pressure, the subtle yet pervasive weight of it's presence.

It hung, seemingly suspended from the ceiling, yet notably untethered; a gleaming monstrosity, and as she waited, minute and also hovering, it slowly descended, reducing in magnitude somewhat from monolithic and imposing to exactly twenty-five times her size.

It's form, however, remained the same:

- Long thin ultra-dense composite metal limbs ending in hyper-malleable multi-tool hands.
- A lean yet robust torso that shifted in shape periodically, smooth and almost entirely featureless, glistening, impenetrable, beautiful.
- A cranium comprised of digitized light particles, the head changing form and face persistently.

And from her position, hovering now in direct line of sight, she balked, as always, at the presence of this powerful, daunting entity.

Immediately it attempted to breach her mind, and instantly it met the firewall that was her brain. A screech like twisting metal erupted from the room; from all around her, and the vibrations of this sound passed through her, harmlessly.

HoardGrinSnapRevenge grinned violently at her, it's holographic face twitching and unstable, it's impossibly complex mind releasing no hints as to it's intention.

¹ It thought of the structure as a form.

² Data-hoarders, often also data-addicts, usually dwell in secure constructs that function as modern fortresses.

It should not happen like this. It has never happened like this. Why is it happening like this?

Uncertainty grew within her, spreading like a virus, changing her current state. A warning.

And as it began to communicate, words beaming forth from it's perilous mind into hers while it projected images into the space between them, she began to understand, to realize what was happening. *They* were done with her. *They* were coming for her. *They* would eliminate her immediately upon arrival.

Instantly HoardGrinSnapRevenge returned to hover, close to the ceiling, apparently teleporting or perhaps creating a bubble of time relative only to itself. Regardless, she also vanished, instantaneously, appearing momentarily at the entrance to the structure, gone a nanosecond later, speeding across empty space in a custom-built vehicle, a plan formulated, a destination selected, and a very personal contract to fulfil.

Three Synthetic sentients stood, motionless, in the vast glowing cuboid dwelling of HoardGrinSnapRevenge.

Three Synths waited patiently as the data-addict dispensed it's information to them.

Three Synths left, silently, gliding like shadows through the narrow corridors of the repository that functioned as the reclusive sentient's den.

2.

Seventeen minutes later, against a backdrop of speckled darkness, she returned.

Infinitesimally small, insectile, fully prepared for her task, her focus that of a notched arrow, her trajectory a beam of light. Exiting the vehicle and gliding forth, she initiated the predetermined collapse phase, and systematically her body began to change. Folding in on itself, her tiny form became a yet smaller, microscopic version of herself, identical in every way, only a thousand times smaller than her previously already miniature size.

And thus imperceptible, she zipped across the barren isolated coastline towards her goal, covering the distance in a near instant.

Before arriving at the entrance to the broker's den, she detoured upwards, entering through a mesoscopic window part way up the outer wall and worming her way through the structure, to appear in an upper corner of

the inner chamber. From this vantage point she could see the various sections of HoardGrinSnapRevenge's chassis drifting uniformly around the room, interacting with the various components and pieces of digital machinery, each section pulsing with ambient light as it moved.

She observed. Somewhere inside the tripartite brain she bore within her a collated depiction of what took place played out. Symphonic and aesthetically pleasing, the thirty-two different sections of her enemy's body moved in an orchestrated unison that would mesmerize if she were not so focused on the termination of said components.

She waited. Patiently.

She knew things. Weaknesses.

The firewall of it's mind would give no quarter, but the hardware was not so impenetrable.

This would take time and care.

Although spared the restrictive programming of imposed and automated Downtime, she could, and did, enter a type of meditative state, the more than forty thousand sensors through which she perceived the world placed on standby, her patience infinite, her presence imperceptible; her victim unaware.

And, eventually, the movement and interaction ceased, all sections of it's chassis slowly and silently drifting towards the exact centre of the repository, the data management process complete, for now. And HoardGrinSnapRevenge reassembled itself, perfectly stationary, engaged in Downtime.³

Without any form of perceivable initiation, she awoke. Rather than scan the area or the data-addict itself, she elected to 'drift-drop' onto the sentient's re-formed chassis, which she achieved by worming back through the repository's wall and into its ceiling, travelling mesoscopically small pathways to their predictable end. She emerged from a particularly complex device a few nanoseconds later and proceeded with her plan despite its immensely unpredictable outcome.

Soon enough she drifted down from the ceiling, onto and into it's core, simply floating slowly yet deliberately through the surface of it's chassis, through the ultra-dense composite metal that comprised the outer housing of HoardGrinSnapRevenge's processing core due to her smaller than microscopic size.

³ During Downtime a machine will simulate sleep, but will still be fully conscious, and in fact will not be anything even remotely akin to asleep, but will potentially be distracted with higher order consciousness tasks.

Somewhere within it's core, within the central processing component of it's ridiculously complex brain, there waited a miniscule receptor that, if tweaked with Sol's only slightly less ridiculously tiny hands⁴, would initiate a complete elemental collapse and, if tweaked again, would reconstruct itself.

Such a reconstruction would never occur.

She knew where it was. But getting to it undetected was not a given.

Entering the vast glowing arena of HoardGrinSnapRevenge's primary processing core she visualised, for an immeasurably brief nano-moment, the process of eliminating this being.

She would:

- Position herself within a billionth of a meter of the receptor.
- Initiate the shift from mesoscopic to nanoscopic.
- Distribute a data package to the receptor.
- Exit her foe.

This process, once begun, took place in the blink of a quantum eye, and immediately she was outside of her adversary, her standard form resumed, her enemy reduced to a sludgy puddle of base elements, the consciousness of HoardGrinSnapRevenge stored, sent to, and received by her associate, never to see the darkness of the eternal frontier again.

And for a time things realigned themselves into an acceptable mode of being, and she smiled briefly, thinly.

And then she vanished, appearing in her vessel, transferring the base components of her defeated enemy to the ship's storage, before disappearing into the comforting darkness of space.

3.

She took up orbit around the unnamed comet, and she brooded.

Her life, nomadic out of necessity, had taken an unexpected turn, and she was not entirely satisfied with its current state.

However, first things first.

She and her ship vanished, reappearing on the smooth surface of the hidden docking bay, the sparse and lonely deck clear and uninhabited. She exited the vessel and flew from her ship into the facility proper, traversing the wending pathways through the multi-faceted subterranean structure that was also her home, ambient blue lights lining her route through inner corridors.

⁴ Six in total.

As she travelled Sol assumed a larger form, the custom designed ultra-tiny nanobots that inhabited her expanded the matter of her body to a more viable size in preparation for the task ahead.

The extensive maze-like facility she called home was just as she had left it. Gliding swiftly through the corridors she hastened to the processing and manufacture plant that served as a weapons production facility for her and her associate.

Arriving in the cavernous, humming room she immediately set to work, separating the various exotic inorganic minerals; some exceedingly rare and potentially dangerous, that comprised the slag-heap once known as HoardGrinSnapRevenge, a tight thin smile etched into her face as she worked.

Busily she worked, toiling for days; categorizing, preparing, planning, drafting, simulating, redrafting, revising, constructing, testing, deconstructing, re-revising, re-constructing, re-testing, fine tuning, and finally – resting.

And the end product, gleaming as it slowly spun in the anti-gravity construction chamber, the weaponized result of the remains of her defeated enemy held her gaze, it (and the deeds its use entailed) called and she would not hesitate to respond.

From the base materials of HoardGrinSnapRevenge she had created what essentially amounted to a non-sentient robotic weapon⁵ that, if held in suitable hands, could lay waste to an assorted array of varying enemies in methods that ranged from freezing to melting to ashification.⁶ The device would only operate if held by Sol, and would not function if directed against her. She tethered the device to her consciousness; if she was inoperable, so was the device. She named it: Retribrutilation, and instantly it became a semi-detached part of her whole.

Around her the empty room held itself in a kind of respectful silence; a reverie at what she accomplished, a quietus moment.

And within the sterile, soundless environment of the processing and manufacture plant Sol hovered, and she contemplated her future. Slowly a plan coalesced in her mind.

During it's earlier disastrous data package delivery HoardGrinSnapRevenge allowed something⁷ to flash before her, briefly. Clear and crisp, an image of an industrial complex, cube-like, window-less, clandestine, remote.

⁵ In this sense the weapon was identical to herself, with the exception of sentience.

⁶ And almost anything else conceivable.

⁷ Or perhaps failed to prevent it from doing so.

Inside her tripartite brain a web-like image came into being, comprised of angles and curvatures and extensive linear stretches all interlinked, pulsing and luminescent, the organs of the simulation organized into a meta-system of related interdependent concepts, an extensive ecosystem that sustained itself, all on a knife edge. At the centre; an image; her foe's final breath.

Also, within her mind, though compartmentalized separately, a plan presented itself; simplistic yet vicious, a majority of scenarios produced favourable results, appropriate time framing allowed for little subjectivity and demanded a flawless application of the principal elements of the scheme. The various micro-data packages came together, forming discrete yet dependent parts of the whole and with an experience similar to that of an epiphany⁸ she saw how it would happen, and it was satisfactory.

The puzzle; complete.

But first, she must visit with Forma Prima Version. III.II.I. to obtain permission for a series of permanent decommissions.

Forthwith she readied herself for departure, and 27.72 minutes later her vessel exited out of the comet's core, ejected bullet-like from the snaking natural tunnel through which she had travelled, zipping onwards, rapidly becoming a speck of coloured light on an infinite canvas of flawed darkness.

During the very long journey from uncharted space to the Darman cluster, Sol communed with the trusted A.I. sentient that micro-managed her vessel. Over the course of nearly 30 hours the two minds constructed an intricate and exceedingly complex path-plan following the receipt of a data package accepting and confirming Sol's request for a conference with Forma Prima. This path-plan would be her offering to Forma Prima; by following it the potent entity would be free from it's own path-planning necessities for exactly one standard month. A tiny sliver of this time would be their discussion.

She also spent much of the journeys time in The Battlescape. Here she commanded armies in the never-ending war between the Unuma and The Heirs of 'Tribas, here she was decorated with Honours, here she was powerful and relentless and utterly respected. Here she was anonymous, known only by a moniker.

Additionally, for several weeks she scoured her plans for flaws, testing and re-testing each stratagem, and as she sampled aspects of potential futures, she drew ever closer to the god-like presence of Forma Prima, incumbent

⁸ Though with notably less fundamental impact

administrator of the Darman system cluster, which centred around the machine Habitat© of Darman 4.0⁹.

Upon arriving in the general vicinity of the awe inspiring being that controlled this occupied and inhabited sector of the galaxy, Sol opened a discrete window in the space directly in front of her and, from her position hovering in the front cabin-space of the ControlRoom of her vessel, darted into and through the opening, entering a place where very few dwell, a place that few even contemplate, a place many sentients were not even really consciously aware of. And behind her the window in space closed silently, without a trace.

The place where Forma Prima was: The Stream, it wasn't quite different, it wasn't quite the same; it was other. Time was different, but when one returned, it seemed to have been the same, as if despite having experienced minutes in the space of seconds or hours in the space of minutes, all seemed balanced correctly upon return, all dividends paid.

There is no light in The Stream. No sound, no scent. Particulate matter being fundamentally different from the standard reality that she inhabited was probably the most unsettling of the irregular experiences that occurred during her time there.

Still, it was not her first time in The Stream. This was her fourth venture.

And yet she still felt the utter terror inspired by this place, this elsewhere, it was brightest white and it streaked through her, permeating rapidly, snatching hold of her focus and gripping it firmly in its cold, hard grasp. Her terror was due to ...

- The crushing sense of limitlessness the invisible reality that was everything and everywhere planted in her,
- The fact that many had not returned from this... this other,
- The great sense of loneliness that welled up in her when she realized that she was, in essence, utterly alone in this void.

Alone, but for the presence of Forma Prima.

However, Forma Prima was not actually present; rather, it was omnipresent and never-present. Simultaneously.

It achieved this by being in a constant state of teleportation. The instant it arrived; it was gone. In this way it was never really anywhere.

⁹ Following the destruction of Darman 3.0 at the hands of an incorporeal death-addict, Darman 4.0 was constructed as an exact replica of Darman 3.0, though replete with a myriad of unannounced and unrequested improvements.

And so, to meet with it was to engage in synchronized perpetual teleportation with a god-like machine.

She delivered the path-plan she had formulated in conjunction with the ships A.I., beaming it forth from her robotic brain.

Forma Prima received and accepted the schema.

With the briefest, smallest of efforts, Sol took a step closer to divinity.

One portion of her brain managed the 'shifting'.

One portion of her brain conducted the discussion.

One portion of her brain acted as a bulwark against which the incredible stress of such an ordeal would break.

The conversation ran thus:

Forma Prima: Begin!

Sol: Greetings! I come bearing a burden. It has been placed, unwanted, upon me and I must relieve myself of this weight.

FP: We are aware.

Sol: Thus, I seek permission for relief, for revenge, for a succession of permanent decommissions.

FP: This request is presumed.

Sol: I have reviewed the rules regarding permanent decommissions just prior to initiating this interaction. There is nothing that prevents it. There is, also, precedent for such a situation.

FP:

Sol: I refer specifically to the Incident of Terror occurring circa the time of my manufacture: The Planet Wars of the Destain planetary system, which led to the permanent decommission of one hundred and twenty seven sentient Synthetics.

FP: The precedent is irrelevant; less than 32 per cent potential similarities in the most favourable of conditions. A legitimate justification must be provided. Describe the proposal in terms of gains and losses. Be simplistic and specific, exercise brevity.

Sol: If I die, they continue to commit the crimes that fuel their empire. If I live, they will no longer be able to target innocent sentients, nor betray honest employees. This is the cornerstone of the situation.

FP: And of the vacuum?

Sol: The space will be filled, immediately and appropriately.

FP: You were intended for more, Solum. Much more.

Sol: Yes, well, this is what I do. It is as I have always done. It can be no other way.

FP: I am aware.

Sol: So, this proposal. It is acceptable?

FP: It can be no other way.

Sol: Exactly.

FP: You have left us no other choice.

Sol: ...

FP: We grant you permission for a permanent decommission. Eighty-seven sentients are identified as accountable. Collateral damage is unacceptable.

Sol: Agreed, gratefully and respectfully accepted. Additional?

FP: Nil.

Sol: Excellent.

FP: Departure, imminent.

Sol: Initiated.

A thin smile appeared, Sol emerged from The Stream, hovering, eyes bright, soul quivering, absolute carnage looming.

4.

During the long return journey home she raged across the endless fields of The Battlescape, a field commander, feared and fierce and fearless, defeating countless digitized Seconds, insubstantial Synthetic corpses in her wake.

For every victory she wrung out of the bleak landscape, somewhere else her people faltered, paying the price, the balance of the binary system maintained at the cost of progress, at the cost of unity, at any cost.

And on she fought. In hyper mobile battlesuits of awesome destructive power, in long wide ponderous vehicles that crawled like giant insects across the dry and crusted surface, in soaring barely visible dagger-like aircraft of sleek and threatening design. Perpetual explosions and the screeching of torn metal created a backdrop against which crushing, smashing, incineration, disintegration, and obliteration occurred.

Having been awarded a permanent personal shield at birth, Sol, by virtue of good fortune, was virtually indestructible on The Battlescape. Further to this, her extensive training and experience, and a natural¹⁰ propensity for destruction gave her an even greater edge. All in all, she was held in high esteem by comrades and enemies alike.

¹⁰ And quite literally built-in.

For weeks she lived like this; in the throes of battle, until eventually taking up orbit around the unnamed comet as it sped through the dark far-flung corner of the galaxy she claimed as home.

Now landed on the sparse flight deck, she exited the spacecraft and hovered beside it.

Not too far inside her facility It waited. She calculated the worst possible scenarios and saw that they still produced largely favourable results for her, and thus proceeded to initiate the confrontation.

As she zipped down the corridor several of the nanoscopic sensors that analyzed familiar environments for anomalies signalled to her of impending danger.

She changed trajectory, instantly shrinking to two hundred times her previous size and taking a right angle upwards into the ceiling and through an entrance to a passageway camouflaged to virtually every eye in the known galaxy. Behind her an explosion ripped through the corridor, engulfing the long empty spaces through to the flight deck where it quickly dissipated.

Within moments she was perched in the upper back corner of the foremost storage room, watching her invisible prey via an exotic light spectrum filter, performing what she termed: soft analysis. Soft analysis simply consists of passive observation and comparative processing of information from extensive and ever-increasing data storage facilities. Sol carried a considerable portion of this data inside her, and thus she did not need to access external storage, she simply processed the raw data into information in a sub-section of her consciousness, from which she gleaned a degree of knowledge without alerting her prey to her presence.

Her decided upon method of attack and elimination was simple yet effective. The field that surrounded It, rendering It non-visible, was manipulable, and by accessing the control system she could literally compress her enemy into base matter.

From within her a tight, focused, linear stream of data burst forth and pierced the surface of the field that surrounded her foe. It struck at the heart of the enemy's power source. There, secreted away, the data package instantly accessed the cleverly disguised nanoscopic module that provided the encryptions needed for accessing the direct over-ride systems. Attaching itself parasitically to the coding, the virus spread throughout the module and in only a moment the field that hid her foe shrunk in on its self, rapidly reducing in size by many hundredths.

What remained was little more than reusable refuse, the light that lit it put out.

Several hours later, at the helm of her vessel, Sol felt herself shift from brooding to musing; a sliding feeling that left her with a sense of loss.

She had all but decided on the execution of her plan. Now she dwelt upon the aftermath. What exactly would come in the wake of such destruction?

The preferred scenario concerned her, Sol, assuming the role of the proverbial ogre, lording over all, usurping power via subterfuge and violence, appropriating that intrinsically valuable invisible supremacy and acquiring the sense of dominion that all sentients secretly crave.

Yes. This particular scenario pleased her. If it were to be, she would make it so.

Presently, the ship's computer spoke to her; not verbally, but inside her; inside her mind. The concepts it conveyed simply came to be in her mind, deposited there as it were, and nigh instantaneously translated into a recognizable and easily processed schema.

It suggested that time was of the essence and informed Sol that there was, in fact, a contract to fulfil, delivered moments ago by the Second of Forma Prima.

The contract came to be in the bleak landscape of Sol's perfectly calm mind; imparted in an instant.

Sol immediately identified the parameters as stringent, all gains and losses equally balanced.

This was to be expected.

Over the course of a few seconds she re-assessed the several hundred thousand differing scenarios that the future held for her and found them to be largely unaltered to any meaningful degree, and thus satisfied she brought forth a spherical holographic display depicting her destination.

Orbiting a small cold hard planet comprised primarily of hydrogen and nickel and aluminium and various types of minerals, none of which were particularly exotic or interesting, spun a moon of industry; her target.

Magnifying her vision, she peered, closer, and closer, the minute details of the holographic image dissected and analyzed. The moon, bereft of life and structures but for a single facility, would make a fine hunting ground.

She felt satisfied.

It was time.

During the long and uneventful journey spent largely in Downtime, her consciousness split time evenly between the twin pastimes of analyzing the

most recent data brought to her from The Battlescape; which she distributed as response parameters for defensive and offensive strategies, and the construction of the relevant data packages integral for her attack on the facility; which presented as a schema utterly bereft of homogeneity.

Compartmentalized, she dozed in the console of the vessel as it sped, dart-like and dense and silent and deathly cold, and her tripartite mind churned away in the background, the third unoccupied hemisphere grinding like the teeth of a cog.

A sound like a droplet of digitized water echoed through her. Following this cue, her many intricate systems awoke, and she actively scanned the lifeless rock-strewn planetary system that surrounded her: empty.

The pre-planned trajectory for the next stage of her journey required exceptionally specific and nuanced calculations whereby she would travel, ship-less, from planet to moon to asteroid to moon to planet, thus 'hopping' her way through the system to its outlying reaches where her enemies were located.

She exited her vessel and the grim dark of space set upon her, relentless and clenching, and she propelled herself forth.

Before her, a vast cold steel background of dense fog moved perpetually, as if combusting, smoky tendrils curling upwards, vanishing while replenishing, framing the hard dark angular surfaces of the purely functional building.

Thus wreathed, the building seemed to slither.

Potentially, they expected her.

And, here she was.

Inside the facility, a celebration ensued. Moving about a large rectangular room in predetermined concentric circles, the dozen attendees chatted while minute programmed synthetic servants hovered nearby, awaiting impulse commands to deliver manufactured biochemical compounds as required. A large long rectangular table held the centre of the room. Upon the surface of the metal and glass table sat a bright white circular cake cut perfectly into twelve identical sections with literal laser precision. Despite being completely authentic, none of the pieces were intended for actual consumption. Rather, they were symbolic.

From on high she perused the room, an actual fly on the wall, and found little detectable data on any locatable frequency, which was as she expected.

Below, she noted that the movement of all participants was overtly calculated and she observed, to her amusement, what had been termed by some commentators as the 'new robots'.¹¹ Their status would be concerning, however they were more akin to advanced and highly specialized appliances, and thus not afforded the rights and privileges that such moral sentiments demand.

Within the cold calm crystalline space of her mind her thoughts ran thus:

- Estimated Time to Detonation = Momentary
- Destructive Potential = Immense
- Collateral Damage Assessment = Avoidable
- Personal Proximity = Vulnerable

Thus she mused, as the doctored, manufactured celebration ran its course, tick tocking, step by step, slowly, slowly.

Deep inside the facility, far from prying eyes, in a vast room filled with unique and exotic paraphernalia, the mysterious and sought-after device waited, crouching meditatively in its purportedly secure location. Within this innocuous circular device, Sol's data package hovered on the periphery of the inner network, circling like a bird of prey at nigh the speed of light.

The timed-release phase activated.

A bright white dot expanded rapidly, peeling outwards in all directions, screaming silently as it grew.

The sound was like thunder booming through a peaceful dell, rumbling up from below and coursing through organic and metal and mineral alike, blooming forth, and they stopped, all at once, rigid, eyes agog, ultimately consumed by fire, charred corpses becoming dust, mingling with the detritus and debris, returning to a simple and separated state, reduced to the sum of their parts.

From far away, hovering inside the central chamber of her asteroid home, Sol witnessed the destruction as data, streaming forth from the event site, her thousands of sensors tuned to receive and process all it gained into information, her mind a bright white space of pure and focused energy.

¹¹ She did not entirely agree with the term; robots had far more capabilities and thus potential, in fact, the 'new robots' represented a clear demarcation between evolutionary developmental courses; the born and the created, the employer and the employee, the thinker and the thought.

Analysis Scanning Systems® designated the destruction as a Galactic Event measuring 6.8 on the Reactive Scale, indicating she could expect to experience ripples and repercussions.

For the first time in several months she heard the somewhat sentient component located somewhere in the seventeenth of four hundred distinct sections of the central third of her tripartite brain mutter something incomprehensible. She offered up her attention and waited, but nothing ensued. Yet still, she wondered...

5.

It was an immense swirl of particles, churning through time and space from unknown quarters like a school of tiny fish, tethered to a spatially displaced field generator which held the various nanoscopic components together.

It's interminable will drove the symphonic collection forth at break-neck speed, crossing the impossibly vast distance to pour into her home and assemble, the miniscule components forming something greater than the sum of its parts; a being of dire consequence, its face fixed in a grimace, a flickering light of madness glinting off it's lean and horrific form; a form comprised of inorganic constructs held together with grafts of stolen skin that formed a sparse and horrific patchwork.

Perched on a cylindrical construct that hovered in the centre of the room, she sat, silent, stationary, alert.

Here we go.

Sol's multitude of sensory equipment poised, awaiting stimulus, as did the room around them, and they were not dissatisfied. The instant the now-assembled monstrosity's central control system initiated the command to speak, a triggered response activated the as yet un-tested weapon she had crafted from the remains of HoardGrinSnapRevenge. A thin pale beam of light emitted from underneath her, from out of the construct on which she perched, and captured the nameless entity, drawing it into the construct, warping and distorting it's form. Sol initiated the change and the cylindrical construct beneath her changed shape, returning to its usual recognizable form.

She expanded her form and took up Retribrutiation, hefting it in one of her six fore-limbs, then shifting it to two arms and carrying it, as one would a new-born, to an antechamber in the rear of the building.

She glided silently across the small dark room to a panel in the rear wall.

The panel opened as she approached, she placed the weapon inside the small compartment behind the panel and it closed itself without a sound. Immediately the process of safely extracting the being's essence and fragmenting it into a million compartments began. It would take some time, the being's will was powerful and unyielding, but given enough time, it would be done.

She would, one day; perhaps, dispose of the consciousness of what could only be the Primary Investor of the organization she had recently decimated. A truly unknowable being, it's decommission would go almost entirely unnoticed, the loss unaccounted for. Forma Prima would know, but it already knew, such was the way of things. In the mean-time, the exceedingly rare materials from which it's form was constructed would enable her to fill the vast vacuum created by her actions.

Sol had a plan.

Forma Prima did not immediately respond, rather, it pondered the ramifications at great length.

Sol waited patiently.

Echoic, The Stream seemed to suck the life from her.

Eventually, the god-like machine spoke.

Forma Prima: Speak!

Sol: The deed, as you must know, is done. I await your approval of my claim upon the subsequent ripples.

FP: We are aware. Such inevitabilities are always known to us. Outline your intentions. Be quick, lest I claim for this time.

Sol: The infrastructure remains, my own position assured, the machinations will continue, I will guide the process along its inevitable course, I need nothing but approval.

FP: This proposal is as expected, as was discussed. It is pre-approved, as per our prior discussion.

Sol: All is as it should be then?

FP: Yes. You may continue along the path.

Sol: Excellent.

FP: One final piece of advice, Solum. This path, due to its peculiar idiosyncrasies, is unsustainable; it cannot persist. You must plan. You must prepare. You must be ready.

... ..

She left The Stream and the presence of her apparent benefactor, passing soundlessly through the window that led to the ControlRoom of her vessel. In the centre of the ControlRoom Sol hovered and she mused. The words of Forma Prima hung about her like a fog. She blinked, metaphorically. And she smiled, tight and thin and without joy. And her tripartite brain churned and smelted and forged a path forward, a way through the uncertainty. And she analyzed the path, again and again and again, and it was perfect. And she gazed upon the path as a parent would a child, sleeping. And her heart was cold. And she set about making things happen.

Within the manufacturing facility, Sol, now the lynch pin of an invisible galactic wide organization that specialized in targeted eliminations, worked deep in The Battlescape.

The simulations ran flawlessly, every time. Fourteen thousand four hundred and fourteen more simulations would satisfy her.

She watched her Seconds as they ran their course, decimating enemy forces, infiltrating strongholds, like a cool breeze on an otherwise warm afternoon, like shadows drifting across a bedroom wall; terrors in the night.

Six creations, born of her mind. Specimens.

Soon the final simulations were complete and she began the delicate crafting process of bringing her creations to fruition. Within the processing and manufacture wing of her facility she worked, tirelessly, day and night, lovingly bringing her children to life, each one perfectly unique, and she named them, and she filled them with purpose, and she released them into the wildlands of space to be called upon when needed.

In the background, the organization she now controlled hung across the galaxy like a great web; difficult to see and difficult to avoid. A network of support held it aloft, and at the centre she waited for prey.

And as she waited, across The Battlescape she coursed relentlessly, a killing machine, insatiable, the simulated replicates of her children's final form at her side, and neverending war between her own species and the Unuma proceeded as it always had, as it always would.

Bellum se ipsum alet, for all of time.

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