

The next set of organs was where things went from good to incredible. Skin, hair, and even several organs were displayed before her. Gall bladders, intestines, stomachs, bladders, and other less important organs were able to be perfectly created.

< **ACTIVE:** (E) Gene Expression III >

< *Machinery of life* >

< **EFFECT:** Create intermediate organic items using your Biomass. Intermediate organs may be created >

< **COST:** 20,000 MP per 3cm³ >

This included a bundle of inconspicuous, transparent strands. Nerves. They were the single most important component in Frost's eyes when it came to the restoration of body parts. This opened a tremendous number of doors for Ignis. If she recalled correctly then the core issue with Carpalis' only arm was her agency over it.

Furthermore, she now had the components to even recreate her missing arm.

"Hard to tell. Miss Carpalis is a Demon. Our similarities end as soon as you take a closer look under her skin." Ignis elaborated further as she pointed to a colorless vein. "Look at this. She gave this to me when I found it under her shoulder. It was in the same place where a lymph node was supposed to be."

It had the structure of a branch of coral, but more closely looked like a dried-out bough of some kind of a tiny tree.

"This is?" Frost reached out to touch it. The organ contracted like how muscles did when shocked postmortem.

"Demonic tissue. A Mana Channel. It's another circulatory system that supplies Demonic tissue with mana. I don't even know where to start with making something like this." Ignis' was more shocked than Frost was by the find.

She wanted to know more about it. Since Ignis didn't possess [Appraise Object], Frost was able to uncover a little more about the organ.

[*Appraise Object*].

Mana Channel

< A channel of the Mana System found within magical species. Required for even the most basic motor functions >

“So Demons have their own unique body systems. What about the nervous system? Demons require both?” Frost inquired. “This just got way more complicated. You can’t replicate this?”

“Impossible. I don’t even know how it works. She said all Demons have this. As you know, Demons can cast magic without chanting.” Ignis further explained the magical process in Demons compared to Humans.

The first was that Humans had to move and concentrate mana to create a spell. It came from within but only those with immense knowledge and willpower were able to conjure magic without a chant to help develop the spell.

Demons however were able to bring it out by biological reason. This was through the Mana Channel – an extremely durable system that increased a Demon’s strength the larger their mana capacity was. This was why when their mana was depleted a Demon would remain entirely vulnerable as mana was required for even autonomous systems.

This paired with the fact that Healers could not heal Demons meant that losing even a finger was seen as a catastrophic loss. However, Demon society in the Zelmori continent were more accepting of loss and death contrary to the vengeful Demons of Emvita.

“Meaning her missing arm can’t ever return.” Frost uttered, hoping this wasn’t the case.

“Mn. I can make an arm. But she won’t be able to control it. I still have good news though, Frost. Please don’t look so sad or you’ll make me sad.” Ignis’ tail gently tapped her head as she gave Frost a warm smile. “You were right before about her arm having neurological problems. It won’t be easy because nerves are more complicated than veins, but I can restore Carpalis’ broken arm now!”

This would at least bring Carpalis back to her original state. The only other issue was her fractured Faustian Bargain. No matter the medical knowledge they had there was no possible way for them to help her restore it.

“You’re awesome, Ignis~ C’mere~” Frost embraced her lovingly, causing Ignis to proudly nod her head as if to say, “Praise me more.”

Ignis also had the idea to integrate special tools into Carpalis’ second arm. Due to the lack of Mana Channels, she wouldn’t be able to control it. However, Ignis showed Frost a severed arm. She brandished it like a blade and at once – a giant bone blade sprouted from elbow down.

“It’s all compatible with Humans and many Demi-Humaneyess. We have very similar biology. Not only can I replace their bodies, but I can also enhance them with weapons.”

“So an arm can become a blade at the spur of a moment.”

“Mmn. Legs can become tentacles. More arms can burst from the back of a person. Even eyes –” She then moved to a pair of eyes which were installed into the center of the table. “– can emerge to help them.”

What Ignis had created were not only biological replacements, but also weapons. If one wished, then they could have both arms replaced with Ignis' versions. Due to the compatibility of her created items, it would be under their sole control. In the future it may even be possible for her to totally replace a person with an immensely powerful version.

But then that brought the question of whether that was really them in the first place and not a doppelganger.

"The Black Wings were interested in the application of it." Ignis revealed. "It can make them much stronger. Also, do you remember Cara?"

"The Dawn Collection Team Manager? Yes. Did she speak to you?"

"No. It was Mimicry. There are a lot of Scarlet Logic defectors. All of them have problems with their bodies. I think they can be used. They're not bad people. Cara... she was there to help." It pained Ignis to even utter the name of that traitorous Atelier, but she empathized with Cara and Usa's team.

Justica Arms had detained a considerable amount of Scarlet Logic defectors. Frost had an idea. If they were anything like the Blood Moons, then she had use for them. Paired with Ignis' biological augmentations and they'd perhaps make for another splendid, vengeful force.

Or more than that...

... Nav. Are you thinking what I'm thinking?

"Scarlet Logic's forces will fight against their own. There is no one else more willing to die for that cause."

Exactly. And with this, we can make them better.

"Wouldn't that mean Ignis will be taking the position of Wrath within the Nexus? We are, after all, missing an Atelier and Beholder symbolizing the Affinity of Wrath."

Frost's lips curled into a sinister grin. Of course, she'd never allow Ignis to become a Beholder unless she explicitly desired it. More than that, it would be Frost or someone else other than Ignis who would manage the group.

But even so, Nav was correct.

Because if there was anyone other than Frost who despised Scarlet Logic more, then it would be Ignis.

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Before Frost left Ignis she revealed that Stella would soon be receiving her eyes. She guessed that she required [Gene Expression IV] before she could make it work, but she was also in the position of making it happen right now.

The only component she was missing were rods and cones of the retina – which were specialized photoreceptor cells that allowed one to detect light in the first place.

“Make it special. We’ll wait until it’s perfected. Let’s not give Stella an incomplete gift. She deserves better. That kid has gone through enough already.” Frost sincerely asked, and Ignis responded with a small, understanding nod.

“I will do everything in my power to make it perfect. No one should have to lose anything or be born like that. Frost. I still remember that day. The way people were broken down. How everyone turned into slimes.” Ignis, though her face was unchanging, spoke with a quavering voice. “The strong didn’t want to save us. We had to do it ourselves and all we... I could do was hide and close my ears.”

It was rare of her to speak so deeply about herself. Her crimson eyes were moist with brimming tears. But beneath that was a flame of conviction that rallied Frost’s heart.

That’s right. I only understood that Ignis’ desire was revenge. But now that I realize it...

“I want people to be able to protect themselves. That’s why I will do it!” Her determination was indomitable. While the future was never set in stone, Ignis seemed to have already carved her path out so clearly that Frost was at a loss for words.

... She’s the Symbiote because she wants to help people. People that can’t help themselves. I never thought of it that way.

“And who do you think she took after?”

You’re giving me too much credit. But if that’s really the case...”

She placed a hand on Ignis’ head one last time before departing from the clinic, leaving behind a young girl with the capabilities of manifesting her dreams into reality. But before she was able to leave, Ignis tackled her from behind, her face buried deep into her back.

“... Then I couldn’t be more proud of her. There’s still a lot to teach her. But if she’s like that then it won’t be long until she teaches me a thing or two. I still remember when she couldn’t talk to anyone... how far has she come along?”

Nav remained silent. When the two separated, the sapient machine put down a book as she glanced over at a tall mirror just across Anna’s tea table.

“I’m envious. When will I be able to see myself change?” She coldly wondered, not a soul around to hear her words as she blankly stared into the reflection...

... yearning to become more than just a cold machine sewn in up tidily in human skin.