

Mech 4271

Chapter 4271 Too Afraid

As Ves continued to observe the unfolding battle from many different perspectives at once, he noted that Lanie was doing pretty well for herself.

The only problem he had with her decision making so far was that she attracted way too much attention with her actions.

Out of all of the Lucid Rages that the Avatars deployed into battle, hers was the only one that had been able to disarm the heavy mechs of the Pima Defenders left and right!

By stripping over two-dozen powerful mech weapons from the hands of the enemy machines, the Pima Defenders most certainly took note of Lanie's abnormally high skill.

Even if she wasn't an expert candidate herself, it was absolutely worth it for the Fridaymen to dispatch an expert candidate of their own to stop Lanie from stealing more weapons.

Ves only glanced at her Lucid Rage briefly before setting aside his concerns.

As a mech champion, Lanie did not pilot an average mech. Her Lucid Rage received multiple upgrades and modifications such as a strengthened cockpit, reinforced tonfas and other minor improvements.

He had already told Commander Melkor to pay a bit of extra attention to Lanie during her debut battle. If she ever got into trouble, the nearby Avatar mechs would not idly stand by and allow the enemy to threaten her life!

Seeing that the duel between the Lucid Rage piloted by Lanie and the Favored Son piloted by an enemy expert candidate turned into a stalemate, Ves no longer paid any attention to Lanie's performance.

As much as he cared about her, there were many other clansmen that also deserved his notice.

Besides, the other fights were much more exciting!

For example, the Penitent Sisters and the Swordmaidens had teamed up to pressure a different section of the enemy battle line.

What was curious about the Sundered Phalanx units was that they clearly developed a healthy respect towards all of the mechs that were known to be able to launch a powerful battle formation attack.

Every time a large enough formation of Penitent Sister, Swordmaiden or Glory Seeker mech approached the enemy battle line, the Fridaymen set a predetermined plan in motion.

First, the melee mechs that were most at risk of getting caught up by a massive area attack dispersed as much as possible without compromising too much of their own lines.

The spread out in such a way that the mechs in the front remained stuck while the ones at the rear had distanced themselves from each other as much as possible!

Ves found it kind of funny how scared the enemy reacted to just the hint of getting targeted by a battle formation.

Obviously, the Sundered Phalanx still suffered from the trauma of losing lots of mech pilots as well as the entire crew of one of their deep strike fleet carriers in a single extraordinary attack wave!

Acting spooked was not the only response that the Fridaymen had formed against the possibility of getting swept by a giant wave of death energy.

Ranged mechs mostly hailing from the Blackened Reapers directed drastically more firepower towards the Swordmaidens and Penitent Sisters!

This made it a lot more difficult for mechs such as the Second Swords and the Valkyrie Redeemers to do their jobs!

The only consolation was that the Blackened Reapers had to give up attacking other targets, thereby giving the Hex Army more room to press their own attacks.

"This is too annoying!"

"What are our ranged mechs doing? Those Blackened Reapers need to be shot down."

"It's as if the Fridaymen have nothing else on their mind but preventing us from grouping."

The only way the Swordmaiden and Penitent Sister mech units could escape widespread suppression was if they dispersed their formations and spread themselves out across the battle lines.

Surprisingly enough, not a single enemy ranged mech bothered to shoot at the mechs hailing from the two infamous mech legions when the option of launching a battle formation attack was taking off the board.

"It's as if the Fridaymen are training us not to employ this trump card." Ves concluded with a perplexed expression.

In fact, neither Legion Commander Sendra of the Swordmaidens or Legion Commander Valerie Chancy of the Penitent Sisters wanted to resort to their strongest measures so quickly.

Though the Sundered Phalanx presented plenty of target-rich environments to the Larkinson Clan, the effect of killing a lot of mech pilots and disrupting an entire chunk of the enemy front was not as great as it sounded.

"It's like a nuclear option to put it in simple terms." General Verle explained to Ves when the latter requested clarification. "The threat of employing a weapon of mass destruction is generally more useful than activating it. Just look at how much the movements of the Swordmaidens, Penitent Sisters and Glory

Seekers disrupt the arrangements of the Sundered Phalanx. Our enemies have to implement far more changes than us in an attempt to mitigate the damage if we ever decide to resort to this measure. If we want to make the most out of our battle formations, then we should save it for a later time."

"How much later should we wait?"

"It depends, sir. You should already be aware that the mech pilots participating in such a massive movement will become too tired to retain their battle effectiveness. While they can still fly back to their motherships and hand over their machines to our reserve mech pilots, all of this takes valuable time that we cannot afford at this time. Besides, it is impossible for the enemy leaders to be so complacent towards the threat posed by our battle formations. My gut feeling says the Gaugers are more prepared than we think. The Black Cats are currently working hard to find out the enemy's measures in advance, but we will eventually launch our strongest attacks even if we haven't obtained any further information."

Now that General Verle mentioned it, Ves also found it odd that the Sundered Phalanx wasn't working harder to negate the threat of his iconic battle formations.

Compared to the past, the Larkinson Army fielded a lot more mechs these days, and that meant that the spread and damage potential of its battle formations had grown as well!

One of the problems that the Larkinsons had discovered as of late was that the difficulty of aligning the mentalities of over a thousand mech pilots at once became a lot harder.

The power of the battle network they formed with each other and a design spirit became stronger, but that also amplified the mental burden of keeping it active!

Ves found this to be an unpleasant surprise when he initially learned about it during an experimental attempt to combine the efforts of the Penitent Sisters and the Glory Seekers.

His dreams of binding the minds of a million mech pilots together in order to unleash a cataclysmic attack that could sunder an entire planet or strip an entire CFA warfleet of all life were dashed!

That did not diminish the usefulness of battle formations, though. Their current effect on the battlefield was already fantastic and they granted the Larkinson Clan the ability to defend against powerful warships.

"Right now, most of the Sundered Phalanx mech pilots are still in high spirits." General Verle explained his own considerations. "Our Avatars of Myth and our Flagrant Vandals have achieved good results so far, but their efforts only affect a small part of the massive battlefield. With hundreds of thousands of mechs fighting against each other, it is still the Hex Army that is responsible for most of the fighting. Their performance is good for the most part, but the Sundered Phalanx are highly experienced in fighting the Hexers. The Gaugers have even gained the upper hand at certain sections of the battlefield."

The general was right. The performance of the Golden Skull Alliance was much better than that of the Hex Army.

Everyone involved in the planning of Operation Saturday Market already accounted for this, but the overall performance of the Sundered Phalanx was a little better than expected.

There were multiple reasons why this was the case.

For example, the Gauge Dynasty had been a bit more generous with equipping its colonial mech units with transphasic equipment.

Perhaps mechs such as the Space Piercer did not achieve stellar results against the Avatars of Myth, but they turned out to be significantly more effective when fighting against the mechs fielded by the Hex Army!

Another reason why the Sundered Phalanx gained the upper hand was that the intelligence disparity did not convey the attackers as much of an advantage as they wished.

So what if the Hexers and the Golden Skullers understood their opponents in advance?

The Gauge Dynasty was not wrong to place a high amount of confidence in its security arrangements for the Pima Prime System.

The local garrison employed a lot of highly trained veterans. Not only that, the Sundered Phalanx fielded plenty of powerful mechs by virtue of the Gauge Dynasty's powerful economic strength.

Even if most of the mech divisions on the battlefield were still working with outdated rim-level mech models, the strength gap was not big enough to give the Hexer mechs a crushing advantage.

"It seems it is still up to us to tip the battle in our favor." Ves determined.

The Golden Skull Alliance was certainly doing its part, mostly due to the quality of its mechs.

No matter the difference in quality of mech pilots, as long as mechs on one side were substantially more powerful, it was hard not to drop the ball!

Ves particularly admired the steady and reliable performance of the Cross Clan in this battle.

Though their mechs weren't as exciting and exotic as that of the Larkinson Clan, their machines were designed for war and could always be counted upon to gain advantages on the battlefield.

Most notably, their ranged mechs did not fall too far behind compared to their counterparts in the Larkinson Clan.

This was notable because the inherent tech and sophistication of the Crosser energy weapons fell significantly further behind compared to the latest generation of luminar crystal weapons.

Even though Ves was only a part-time energy weapon developer, the considerable advantages granted by luminar crystals gave his ranged mechs a powerful advantage on the battlefield.

Ves previously thought that Master Benedict might have made a mistake by rejecting the generous offer to adopt luminar crystal weapons.

"There is no need for us to make use of alien technology." Benedict told him at the time. "I do not deny that your guns are powerful, but there are more ways to achieve the same outcome. Perhaps it is my ego talking at the moment, but I do not think my work is any worse than yours. It would be a travesty if a mech designer of my level cannot even keep up with your mech designs."

Today, Master Benedict definitely proved that the ranged mechs of his design were able to carry their own weight!

They were not noticeably tougher than normal. They did not move any faster than normal.

What they did excel at was firing considerably powerful energy beams at a persistent rate!

In order to catch up to the firepower of the Rifle Warriors and other Larkinson ranged mechs, Master Benedict simply scaled up the weapons of his own ranged mech designs!

Scaling up the weapon was the simplest and easiest way to increase its power, but doing so also came with tradeoffs such as increased energy consumption and higher heat generation.

While these were definitely problems to most mech designers, Master Benedict just happened to excel in these areas!

By taking advantage of his specialty, Master Benedict mitigated these downsides, thereby allowing his ranged mechs to punch just as hard as their Larkinson counterparts!

"Well, that's certainly a way to solve a problem." Ves remarked.

There were pros and cons to both approaches. Ves' mechs were not only smaller and more efficient, but also a lot more versatile.

The machines designed by Master Benedict packed more raw power and might even be able to keep firing a bit longer as well.

"It would have been nice if we could combine our strengths." Ves idly thought. "If we could combine my luminar crystal weapons with his energetic mechs, we could probably design a powerhouse of a ranged mech!"

Chapter 4272 Done

"Is this the future of the Friday Coalition?" Tristan Wesseling asked in a hollow tone.

"Power struggles are always messy." Perla Monater said as she stepped up to Tristan's back. "In some cases, the only way to save the lives of the people you care about is to take the lives of others. You know the score, Tristan. The Hexers are no longer the greatest threat to the Friday Coalition. Even if the Hex Federation eventually manages to overwhelm our colonies in the Magair Middle Zone, our home state in the old galaxy will still be safe and sound. At most, we will have to start over and invest in another colonial state in a different zone in the Red Ocean. The more acute threat to our state is the

enemy from within. If the Gauge Dynasty's rise cannot be curbed, then the balance will be broken. Do you think that Carnegies such as you and Master Katzenberg will be able to retain your positions in our state?"

Tristan fell silent for a time. It seemed as if he was spending more time on viewing the live footage of the battle in Pima Prime than on the implications of his handler's words.

Many different broadcasts had popped up in the galactic net that provided many options for viewers to track the unfolding orbital battle.

It couldn't be helped. While neither side of the conflict wanted to expose their mechs and unveil their trump cards, Pima Prime was not exactly an obscure and uninhabited star system.

Instead, it was a fully-fledged port system that had welcomed many visitors!

Even if 90 percent of the traffic that flowed through Pima Prime consisted of Fridayman ships and fleets, the remaining 10 percent largely consisted of foreign traders!

Many of them had already evacuated from the star system as soon as it became clear that Pima Prime had turned into a warzone.

Others lingered in the star system for one reason or another. Plenty of them possessed enough capabilities to observe the battle at the Kosic Ring from afar and broadcast all of the excitement on the galactic net.

It didn't matter if the Gauge Dynasty did not approve of these actions. There were far too many third-party ships to stop. There was no way the Gaugers would be able to maintain their standing in the Red Ocean if they recklessly destroyed all of these broadcasting vessels.

As such, the battle in Pima Prime became a rare public spectacle that attracted the interest of a lot of people in both the old galaxy and the new frontier!

Both high and low people who resided in the Friday Coalition, the Garlen Empire, the Life Research Association, the Heavensword Association, the Smiling Samuel Star Sector, the Magair Middle Zone and the Krakatoa Middle Zone all tuned into one of the many broadcasts.

There were even people who watched multiple broadcasts at once in order to view the battle from different angles!

Friends, enemies, acquaintances as well as lots and lots of customers eagerly watched the broadcasts that focused on elements of the Larkinson Army.

The owners and users of living mechs had long heard that the Larkinsons kept their best stuff to themselves. The dazzling Larkinson-exclusive mechs and expert mechs working hard to defeat the Sundered Phalanx mech units did not disappoint in this regard!

Millions if not billions of spectators fell in love with mechs such as the Transcendent Punisher Mark II, the Ferocious Piranha Mark III, the Redaxe, the Second Sword, the Lucid Rage and so on. Many of these machines had never shown up on the market before and attracted many mech pilots who previously did not pay attention to the LMC's products in the past.

Even Tristan became profoundly impressed by all of the mech designs that Ves had provided to his clan.

Though it was clear that the Larkinson Patriarch frequently collaborated with his own circle of mech designers, that did not diminish his accomplishments.

Ves had progressed incredibly far compared to other Journeymen!

His design philosophy was so powerful and introduced so many new options that his accomplishments so far were probably unmatched by nearly any other mech designer at his age!

Tristan even doubted whether the most privileged and talented scions of the most powerful first-class families and dynasties could outmatch Ves in terms of innovation and adding value to mechs.

Certainly, Tristan possessed a shallow understanding of the unreasonable capabilities of the best Journeymen from the Terran Confederation and the Rubarth Empire.

The elite Journeymen from the MTA were supposed to be even better, but Tristan never really got exposed to them. He was not qualified to get close enough to their orbit.

Regardless, most Journeymen were still at the stage where they mostly relied on the teachings and accumulation of the older generation of mech designers to develop their mechs.

A proficient mech designer such as Tristan could vaguely judge the proportion of originality and novelty of a mech by studying its designer and its characteristics.

For example, whenever Tristan looked at his own work, the amount of elements that were based on existing tech and knowledge was almost always above 97 percent!

Though this was an extremely high number, it was not that bad of a figure in the mech industry. He was just a Journeyman, after all, and he had also learned an awful lot from Master Katzenberg over his apprenticeship, so there were many echoes of her design philosophy in his own mech designs.

It also didn't help that his specialty only left a particularly small footprint in his mech designs. It was difficult for most people to notice the influence of a small

gem that only slightly altered the characteristics of a mech in an esoteric manner unless Tristan added an explanation.

Compared to his subtle design solutions, the ones developed by Ves were as clear as day! Even a blind person could recognize a living mech based on its glow alone!

Tristan felt more lost than ever. A sense of inferiority overtook his mind.

What had he been doing all of these years?

He had spent over 5 years of his life helping his state rebuild the damaged and broken infrastructure of the planets that it had conquered.

He did not regret the time he spent on trying to improve the lives of those that had fallen victim to the Komodo War.

He became more cognizant of how mechs affected the people and the environment and he also grew up a lot faster by spending time on ground zero of many battles than if he remained stuck underneath Master Katzenberg's skirt.

Yet despite developing a lot as a person, Tristan felt more clearly than ever that his mech design capabilities had remained stuck for an awfully long time. Personally, he judged that he was still in the early to middle period of the progression of a Journeyman. This was actually not that bad in the mech industry, but he should have been considerably further ahead given his identity as the direct disciple of a Master Mech Designer!

Tristan glanced at the mechs and expert mechs that clearly carried Ves' distinctive touch and design style.

He became particularly impressed by the newer Larkinson expert mechs such as the Minerva and the C-Man. Their designs encapsulated some of the best

of what their designers had offered, and already these machines gave Tristan a preview of what Ves and his collaborators had in store for the future!

The latest mech models of the Larkinson Clan all indicated that Ves was not that far away from advancing to Senior. Perhaps he only needed to increase his design collection and wait for a turning point before he could completely distance himself from the likes of other Journeymen such as Tristan.

This realization caused the Fridayman mech designer to feel even more lost.

What had he been doing all of these years?

How could he have let himself go astray?

Could he even call himself a mech designer?

As the unfolding battle in Pima Prime continued to hammer all of the work and progress that Ves had achieved over the years, Tristan began to feel a deep and burning desire to catch up to his friend and rival.

Ves possessed much humbler beginnings than Tristan, but nowadays the former citizen of a third-rate state had risen up to the point where he ruled over a prototypical second-rate state by virtue of his design work alone!

This life trajectory was so amazing that Tristan had no hope of topping it in his lifetime!

However, that did not mean that Tristan was willing to give up on this contest and admit his mediocrity.

There were plenty of late bloomers in the mech industry. Some talents managed to stand out in their forties while others only started to gain a lot of respect after two centuries of living.

Though Tristan did not want to wait that long for him to attain success, he was determined to make his mark on the mech industry before he reached his 100th birthday!

A fire lit up in his heart. Though his doubts, self-recrimination and other negative feelings hadn't gone away, they became overshadowed by his renewed passion for his work!

Tristan stood up all of a sudden. He took one last look at the living mechs that were pressing the Sundered Phalanx mechs in many ways and waved his hand to cut all of the feeds.

"What are you doing, Mr. Wesseling?" Perla Monator raised her eyebrow.

"I've seen enough of this battle. What happens next is no longer my concern."

The diplomatic attaché crossed her arms. "The process and outcome of this battle will have profound implications for our state and our coalition partners. It is not an exaggeration to say that the future of the Carnegie Group and the Vermeer Group will be decided by the events that you have set in motion."

"It doesn't matter anymore." Tristan shrugged his shoulders. "I'm done."

"Pardon?"

"You heard what I said. A woman as clever as you should know exactly what I mean by my words. I am done with all of this. I am far too tired with everything the people of my state have foisted upon me. I am finished with working on behalf of people. It is high time that I regain control over my own life and go back to designing mechs for myself."

Miss Monater frowned deeper. There was a tone of finality in Tristan's tone that implied that his decision was more severe than his words suggested.

"Your mission has not yet passed. You have proven your ability to make Patriarch Ves hear you out. Your value has skyrocketed as a result. There are still many potential areas where we can cooperate with the Larkinson Patriarch and his impressive network."

Tristan pressed his lips. "You can find someone else to serve as your lackey. I won't do this anymore. I have already decided to submit a proposal to Master Katzenberg to end my association with her and withdraw myself from her organization. I will also seek her help in arranging my formal separation from the Carnegie Group and the Friday Coalition. I no longer want to be a Fridayman after becoming involved in all of these dishonorable and distasteful actions."

Miss Monater became alarmed. "Do you think you can step away from the Friday Coalition anytime you want? Don't forget that the Carnegie Group nurtured you and provided you with endless opportunities! To renounce your citizenship is one of the most ungrateful acts you can make as a person!"

It was a pity that Tristan was not impressed by her argument. "My relationship with the Carnegie Group and the Friday Coalition has always been transactional as far as I'm concerned. While it is true that my home state has provided a lot of help and opportunities to me, I have served long enough to repay every kindness that I have received. I participated in numerous military mech design projects during the Komodo War. I helped in the reconstruction effort after the war. I managed to convey your message to my old friend and triggered a massive attack that will kill a lot of Gaugers and ostensibly preserve the balance of the Friday Coalition. I believe that all of these contributions are more than sufficient to receive my desired reward."

There was not much Perla Monater could do to argue against that. Personally, she was sympathetic towards Tristan's situation, but she still needed to get in touch with her superiors in order to determine how she should proceed.

"You will lose your ties to Master Katzenberg along with the status that you have built up in the Friday Coalition if you proceed as you have said. What will you do after this, Mr. Wesseling?"

A hopeful smile appeared on Tristan's face. He looked around his environment as if deciding where he should make his new home.

"I think I will remain here in Davute and found my own mech company. The local environment is not friendly to Journeymen such as me, but I think Master Katzenberg will give me enough of a farewell gift for me to start anew. The Red Ocean is a splendid place to start anew."

The Friday Coalition was hundreds of thousands of light-years away. Davute was located in a different zone from the Friday Colonies. Tristan would definitely be able to gain the separation that he desired if he remained on this planet.

"I am... reborn."

Chapter 4273 Family Discussions

There were plenty of notable individuals who paid close attention to the battle being broadcasted on the galactic net.

Many of them were unrelated or only distantly affected by the events taking place in the Pima Prime System.

However, there were also people that possessed much deeper ties with the parties involved in the fighting.

For example, pretty much every member of the Wodin Dynasty was paying extremely close attention to the mechs of the Larkinson Clan and the Glory Seekers.

The main branch members of the Wodin Dynasty had even gathered in one of the great halls of the Palace of New Beginnings so that they could collectively observe the live broadcasts of the battle that had the potential to cement their rise.

Though Matriarch Xiaphna Wodin still held the final word in their dynasty, everyone already knew that Prime Minister Constance Wodin possessed the greatest voice in the New Scimitar System.

It couldn't be helped. One of the standards that the Hexers used to judge each other's worth was how well they raised their immediate children and families.

The excellence displayed by Gloriana and her husband continually reflected back on Madame Constance, making it seem as if she was the best mother the Hexer people had produced aside from the Superior Mother!

Due to the peculiarities of Hexer culture, Constance Wodin's prestige was even starting to catch up with that of the most prominent leaders of the matriarchal dynasties!

Though Constance always maintained a stern expression, there was no way to hide the pride and satisfaction exuding from her bones.

The results produced by the powerful mechs designed by her youngest daughter and her latest son-in-law was enough to make her satisfied for the rest of her life!

"No matter whether they win or lose, the survival of my granddaughter and her spouse must be guaranteed." The matriarch of the Wodin Dynasty spoke.

"We have already issued the necessary orders to our Glory Seekers."
Madame Constance replied. "Marshal Ariadne Wodin has held back several elite mech units along with a fast combat carrier that we have secretly equipped with a superdrive. I believe the Larkinsons are able to evacuate their most important people without our aid, but our troops will always be ready to block enemy pursuit by giving my daughter, her husband and their children time to escape."

Neither Xiaphna nor Constance displayed any care towards the lives of the remaining Larkinsons and Hexers in Pima Prime. Not even blood relatives

such as Marshal Ariadne or Venerable Brutus deserved too much consideration to the two powerful women.

As the leaders of an entire Hexer dynasty, their responsibility was to make the Wodins prosper as a whole. Sacrificing a part of their numbers was an inevitable part of their growth process. It would all be worth it as long as their descendants became more prosperous and powerful in the end!

As far as the two Wodin leaders were concerned, everyone else was expendable. While it would certainly hurt the Wodin Dynasty to lose over a hundred carrier vessels and all of their Hexer crew members, as long as the foundation was still intact, the Wodins could always replenish their losses.

"This battle represents more than the internal struggle of the Friday Coalition or the continuation of the Komodo War." The older of the two women stated. Her eyes remained sharp and calculating despite her obvious signs of aging. "The strength and potential shown by these 'living mechs' has put their designer on the map. The entire Magair Middle Zone is just beginning to discover the power and horror of the war weapons that we have greater access to than any other group aside from the Larkinson Clan. The mechs that are currently fighting against the Fridaymen are more powerful and more difficult to resolve than the ones we utilized during the Komodo War."

Madame Constance felt both pleased and concerned by this remark. "Our Hex Federation has exposed much of its fangs today. I am sure that we have gained the respect of the other colonists in Magair, but I am afraid that we have also aroused their fear towards us. If the performance of our strike group is too good, then we will have a difficult task ahead of us in trying to placate the concerns of our neighbors."

The matriarch of the Wodin Dynasty shook her head. "We cannot control their thinking, Constance. Rather than trying too hard to downplay our might, we

might as well embrace the advantages and disadvantages of presenting a strong image."

It wasn't often that Constance disapproved of her revered mother.

"You sound as if you are willing to gamble with the future of our dynasty and our colonial state."

"You say that as if we had a choice, my dearest daughter. From the moment we have evacuated to the Red Ocean, our Hexer people have only one chance left. Failure will put an end to our culture and society, so why must we act with care? Instead, we should learn from the bold and reckless decisions that have allowed my grandson to rise above every challenger. The time for caution has passed now that we have established our footing in this zone. The time for conquest and expansion has begun. The battle that is taking place in the Friday Colonies is only the first of many steps that we must take as a people."

The ongoing battle had many implications for the Hexer people. It was not as simple as an attempt to raise the morale of the Hexers while also fueling the flames of infighting in the Friday Coalition.

The ripple effects from this single battle would affect events taking place in ten, twenty or even a hundred years in the future!

Though Madame Constance didn't fully understand her mother's thinking, she knew that every Hexer matriarch regularly held high-level policy meetings to discuss and decide upon the future course of the Hexer state.

Previously, Matriarch Xiaphna had never conveyed so much haste and urgency in her words. It was clear that the most recent meeting with the council of matriarchs might have caused a fundamental course change.

The mother of Gloriana fell deeply into thought as she steeped her fingers. Her cranial implant displayed a brief image capture of her granddaughter in her mind.

She had a hunch that her granddaughter may have played an important role in the last meeting.

After all, the meeting happened a short time after the Larkinsons visited New Scimitar and allowed Matriarch Xiaphna to meet with Aurelia in person.

As Constance plotted out the future of her dynasty and colonial state, an entirely different set of relatives watched the events in Pima Prime with much greater concern.

These blood relatives of Ves and many other Larkinsons did not entertain any ideas about how the battle might change the political landscape of the Red Ocean. They held no thoughts about how the Larkinson Clan or the Hex Federation might expand their influence in the new frontier.

All they cared about was the fate of the family members that were putting their lives at risk in the Pima Prime System.

"This damn nephew of mine has gone too far." Patriarch Ark Larkinson complained as he observed the broadcast that centered around the performance of the Larkinson Army. "I thought that he had curbed his more reckless tendencies after he became a father, but it appears he has never let go of his desire to go out and pick a fight with others."

The much older gentleman who was sitting in a medical hoverchair faintly coughed and smiled. "Ves may have a habit of making questionable decisions, but that is the reason why he is wealthier and more powerful than we could have ever dreamed of. The dividends we earn from owning just a fraction of his mech company has already made our Larkinson Family more prominent in the Garlen Empire than before."

Ark placed his strong and solid hand on his father's shoulder. "Careful, dad. The doctors said that your condition is worsening. You should talk so much."

Benjamin Larkinson coughed again. "It matters little whether I will join our ancestors in the afterlife one or three years later. I know my condition. I am not long for this galaxy anymore. The sequelae from my war wounds back then are finally starting to catch up to me. I... don't regret it all. I have lived a fuller life than many, and my children and my grandchildren are prospering to a much greater extent than I could have imagined. The only regret I have is that I have never gotten in touch with Ryncol, though I believe he is doing well enough in his own way."

"I believe so as well." Ark gently smiled.

Both Larkinsons fell silent for a time as they continued to watch the Larkinson Clan fight against the Fridaymen for reasons that they didn't entirely understand.

"We should reunite with Ves." Benjamin stated out of the blue.

"Father?" Ark looked confused.

The older man coughed again. "I've... I've never... held my great-grandchildren in my arms. My time is running out. Aurelia, Andraste and Marvaine are waiting for me in the Red Ocean. We should go, son. We should all go. Staying here in this foreign empire has done us no good. These Garleners are constantly picking fights with each other in order to chase after illusionary glory. Fools..."

Ark began to grow fearful about Benjamin's condition. "We can't, father. Our people have rejected Ves for many reasons. We may be family, but we hold different ideologies. Even if Ves and his clan have defied all of our expectations, you know how our family members are. Their pride won't allow them to admit that they were wrong. They would rather die on a battlefield in

the Garlen Empire than to crawl to the Red Ocean in order to beg for forgiveness from Ves and the other clanners."

"That is why I call them fools. Look at us here. Look at this mansion that we built for ourselves. Is this home to you? Are our family members happy in this star sector?"

"...No." The expert pilot and patriarch sighed. "I understand your point, father. We have tried to settle in the Garlen Empire for multiple years without too many results. The Garleners treat us as foreigners while our family never manages to fit in with the locals. I miss the Bright Republic of old. Everything was much simpler at the time."

"We can never regain the homes that we have lost, but that does not mean our family has no foundation anymore." Benjamin said with a slight cough. "The Red Ocean... is where we will find our true home."

"Our family members won't agree."

Benjamin's aged and wrinkled face sneered. "That is because they have become too accustomed to arguing amongst themselves. They have no sense of leadership. They cannot be trusted to make the right choices. Since even you are able to recognize that our family isn't going anywhere in the Vicious Mountain Star Sector, then you need to put your foot down for once and impose the right decision on everyone."

Ark grew incredibly conflicted when he heard that. "That... is not the way we run our family."

"The old ways created a schism in the family and almost led us to extinction. Not every tradition should be upheld, my son. You are the strongest expert pilot in our family. Your will reigns above all. As long as you are able to explain your decisions, I think you will find much less resistance from the rest of our family."

"..."

"Besides... haven't you always wanted to pilot a new mech that can help you advance to ace pilot? Look at the Cross Clan. Their own patriarch has succeeded in breaking through with the help of a mech designed by my grandson."

Ark found it difficult to resist the allure of obtaining a high-quality expert mech. Though he had built plenty of contacts among the Garleners over the years, it was difficult for them to fulfill all of his wishes due to his foreign status.

Becoming an ace pilot had always been his dream. Becoming a Saint would allow him to raise the voice of his Larkinson Family and solve many of the problems that plagued his relatives.

If he was able to do so while reuniting with Ves and his clan, then Ark might be able to become the protector of both his Larkinson Family and Ves' Larkinson Clan at the same time!

"Maybe I should convene another meeting."

Chapter 4274 Going Serious

If anyone held a contest in the Larkinson Clan that ranked the popularity of its expert pilots, the names at the top would always be in contention.

There were plenty of young, charming and charismatic heroes among the Larkinson expert pilots.

People such as Venerable Joshua and Venerable Tusa always contended at the top of the popularity list. Both of them still possessed a bit of boyish charm and they were always easy to get along with regardless of the other person's identity.

Venerable Vincent also drew a lot of fans due to his outspoken personality and his antics. Many people often treated him as one of the mascots of the Larkinson Clan, though not always in a good way.

Commander Casella Ingvar was perhaps the most authoritative and respected among most of the soldiers of the Larkinson Clan. She was perhaps the most clever and rational expert pilot of the Larkinson Clan and it was a dream for other mech pilots to get Commandeered by her in battle one day.

Though the Larkinsons consistently mentioned these four individuals as their favorites, a few other names showed up once in a while as well.

Venerable Dise commanded a lot of respect among the Swordmaidens and Heavensworders for example. She possessed the strongest swordsmanship and had taught and guided a lot of eager swordsmen and swordswomen over the years.

Compared to the Swordmaidene expert pilot, her close friend and comrade attracted a lot less attention.

Aside from the Flagrant Vandals, hardly anyone cared about Venerable Rosa Orfan.

Who could blame them? Venerable Orfan was older and less charming than the most popular expert pilots. She came across as abrasive at times and did not possess the aristocratic demeanor of the Ingvar siblings.

If Venerable Orfan was younger, she would have tried to raise her profile and impress her power upon all of the clansmen.

She had grown older, though. She fought so many battles and struggled against so many opponents that she no longer felt a burning need to prove her worth to everyone.

While she would be lying if she said that she no longer cared for fame and fortune, the compulsion was no longer as strong as before.

The reason why she tempered herself was because she realized how silly she behaved in front of true strength.

Patriarch Reginald had shown through his deeds and actions how truly powerful individuals conducted themselves.

Instead of chasing after external recognition all of the time, they focused a lot more on training their skills and honing their minds and will.

As long as mech pilots became strong enough, fame and fortune would naturally follow!

That was the lesson that Patriarch Reginald had taught her from afar.

"I need to stop fooling around so much." Rosa Orfan concluded one day. "I'm already falling behind compared to Dise. I'm only able to beat her ten percent of the time. It won't be long before that drops to zero unless I get my act together!"

Ever since she became 'enlightened', she put down a lot of her 'fun' activities and began to get serious in increasing her battle effectiveness.

She polished her spearmanship and sought to develop her own style to a deeper level just like Dise had done with her swordsmanship.

She also spent a lot of time with her Riot and sought advice from people like Venerable Joshua on how to deepen her understanding and relationship with her own machine.

Her improvement was remarkable. She rapidly began to catch up to Venerable Dise again and managed to win three out of every ten duels.

Venerable Orfan didn't even mind the fact that she never managed to increase her win rate further.

Dise was simply a better duelist and it was difficult to get the better of her in a one-on-one fight.

The next turning point in her journey as expert pilot was when the Design Department finally offered to upgrade her expert mech.

The Riot was a fine mech and one that fit Venerable Orfan extremely well, but there was no denying that its performance was falling behind compared to the newer expert mechs that came out in recent years.

Venerable Orfan just had to take one single look at Venerable Vincent's C-Man to feel profoundly helpless at how much stronger and tougher it was in combat.

Defeating the annoying expert brawler mech was nearly impossible due to its strong TESMAS!

The only reasons why Venerable Orfan was able to maintain a respectable win rate against Vincent was because of her greater experience and her stronger resonance strength!

Therefore, Orfan eagerly embraced this golden opportunity to pilot a mech that could finally wipe the grin off Vincent's face!

"What sort of changes do you have in mind?" She asked Ves as both of them stood before the dormant Riot inside an underground hangar bay.

Ves gazed at the black-and-orange mech that exuded an irreverent and playful vibe.

Though his feelings towards the Riot weren't as strong as his affection towards the Everchanger, he was still proud of this design. It was an interesting and unusual variation of an expert spearman mech that amplified Venerable Orfan's most interesting traits.

"The Riot has a strong and distinct character." Ves said as he was not in a hurry to go into details. "Before we talk about possible upgrades, we should determine the direction of the changes that we want to apply. Let me ask you a question. What do you love the most about your expert mech when you pilot it into battle?"

Venerable Orfan pressed her lips and crossed her arms. "Hm. That's difficult to say since I haven't been in a real fight for a long time. The only way I can let loose is when I spar against the other expert mechs with the help of the MSTs. There are two kinds of battle scenarios that I like the most based on my experiences."

"And that is...?"

"One is when I can dive in the middle of a big battle and make a mess out of enemies." The female expert pilot grinned. "The more they lose their cohesion, the more I enjoy the moment."

"Well, your mech is called the Riot for a reason. It is practically designed for this purpose." Ves nodded in understanding.

"The other battle scenario that I enjoy is when I duel against strong opponents. I spar most often against Venerable Dise and her First Sword, but I have tangled against many other expert mechs as well. Win or lose, I have made it my life's mission to last as long as possible while tormenting my opponents in the process."

Ves gained a good understanding of Venerable Orfan's fighting style and preferred approach towards battle from her words.

"I see. The Riot is a stubborn machine in your hands that is difficult to get rid of. It is a resilient machine and one that is eager to confront opponents whether they like it or not. In short, you and the Riot love being a nuisance on the battlefield, don't you?"

"Guilty as charged." Venerable Orfan grinned. "So how can your upgrades make us into an even greater annoyance?"

"Well... for starters, we'll upgrade the usual stuff. There are a lot of high-quality Hexer-developed mech parts and mech systems in your Riot's design that were good at the time of its completion but are already starting to show

their age. Large parts of its internals and internal architecture needs to be redesigned from scratch. All of the major and minor components such as the power reactor, mech engine, sensor systems, communication systems, flight system and so on need to be replaced with high-quality heartland-level components."

"That means my Riot will become a lot stronger, right?"

"Right." Ves affirmed. "To be more precise, your Riot will run smoother, faster and stronger. Most notably, the internal structure of your expert mech will become so strengthened that you don't need to be afraid that a powerful transphasic attack will wreck your mech from the inside."

Venerable Orfan instantly grew concerned. The slow but steady proliferation of phasewater technology had made an impression on many mech pilots.

Few defenses could block the damage potential of transphasic weapon systems!

"About that, Ves..."

"I can already guess your concerns." Ves quickly replied. "Your Riot isn't as well-armored as some of the other mechs such as the Everchanger because your mech is clad with a thinner layer of Unending alloy. I'm sorry for that, Rosa. Your mech deserves better, but there is only so much Unending alloy at our disposal."

The female expert pilot did not seem to care. "I don't hold it against you, Ves. There are other expert mechs and expert pilots who need it more. You don't need to worry about my feelings. I am more than capable enough of holding my own in a fight."

"To be honest, the lower proportion of Unending alloy in your Riot is actually a blessing in disguise." Ves revealed. "The way the Riot's armor is structured at the moment is that it is first wrapped with a relatively thin layer of Unending

alloy before getting surrounded with a thicker application of cheaper and more affordable alloy. The idea behind this is to turn the outer layer into an expendable damage buffer that can easily be repaired when it is damaged. While I think that has worked out for your expert mech, the problem is that this outer layer might very well not exist when you fight against powerful opponents."

"That is definitely the case." Venerable Orfan helplessly said. "I spar against Venerable Dise the most, and it seems each time she fights against me, her First Sword is getting better and better at slicing through my armor. I can't adopt my usual fighting style against her Decapitator sword."

"What if I tell you those concerns will be over?" Ves smirked. "As I said, the armor arrangement of your Riot is a blessing in disguise. The downside is that it doesn't have enough Unending alloy to offer you sufficient protection. The upside is that we can choose any top layer we want. While I haven't been able to find a way to upgrade Unending alloy into a transphasic product, there is no problem placing transphasic armor plating on top of it. If not for the fact that our other expert mechs such as the Dark Zephyr and the Shield of Samar are already weighed down with enough Unending alloy, I would have given them the same treatment."

This sounded like music to Venerable Orfan's ears. She was not unaware of the ridiculous defensive properties of transphasic armor. The Mars was the most prominent example yet of how transphasic armor could resist overwhelming attacks!

"What... what are the details?"

Ves waved his hand, causing a projection of an altered design to appear in front of his body.

"As you can see, the exterior of your expert mech looks a bit different from before. The biggest difference is that Sara Voiken will rework the Riot's entire armor system. She will comprehensively optimize the inner layer made out of Unending alloy while also working together with Melmen Advanced Systems to apply a custom-developed exterior layer of transphasic armor plating, which we have tentatively taken to calling it the ExTrans Armor System."

The Larkinson Clan was a minority owner of Melmen Advanced Systems, which meant that Ves could easily use his influence to make the company participate in this upgrade project.

"ExTrans..." Venerable Orfan whispered as she became completely fascinated by the projection that depicted a possible version of her improved expert mech. "How much phasewater does it have?"

Ves held up three fingers. "Three kilograms. That is quite a lot. Very few expert mechs in the Red Ocean can look forward to this treatment. In fact, our clan still has enough phasewater to increase its allocation to your expert mech, but the problem is that it is technically not feasible at the moment."

"I heard the Mars has 11 kilograms..."

"That is an entirely different beast." Ves shook his head. "Abasis Armor is an ace mech-level armor system developed by Truvek Defenses. This development company is much larger and more impressive than Melmen Advanced Systems. The latter has significantly less expertise and resources at its disposal. You have to be aware that the more phasewater is put together, the harder it becomes to keep it all stable. The difficulty of fabricating the transphasic armor plating also becomes exponentially more difficult, to the point where specialized production equipment is needed that also needs to incorporate a lot of phasewater in order to prevent it from getting torn apart by spatial fluctuations."

Venerable Orfan quickly accepted that explanation. Though she did not have a good idea what 3 kilograms of phasewater could do for her Riot, it definitely had to be substantial!

"Just out of curiosity, how much phasewater did you put into the C-Man's armor?"

"5 kilograms."

"Didn't you just tell me it is difficult to put more phasewater in a mech!?"

"You can't compare apples to oranges, Rosa. Your Riot still retains a substantial amount of Unending alloy. The C-Man's exterior is almost entirely made out of TESMAS. The mass and volume of Venerable Vincent's expert mech is also a bit different from yours. In short, don't think you are worse off. You will see once we implement the ExTrans Armor System to your expert mech. Once we are done with this upgrade project, you can rest assured that you can truly go loose on the battlefield!"

Chapter 4275 Crashing Riot

Ever since the Design Department completed the promised upgrade of the Riot, Venerable Orfan practically became reborn at that point!

Just like how Venerable Tusa and Venerable Stark gained a substantial leap in combat strength after their expert mechs became at least 50 percent stronger, the Riot Version 2.0 was exactly what Venerable Orfan needed to better exert her combat potential.

The overall upgrades to the Riot's components and subcomponents allowed it to run smoother and more fluid than before.

Those were the easiest changes, though. It took a lot more to transform the Riot into a true offensive and defensive powerhouse.

To that end, Dulo Voiken and Tifi Coslone had teamed up to reengineer the arms and other mechanical aspects of the Riot to increase the strength and speeds of its spear attacks!

Though Ves often regarded Dulo Voiken as the most useless Journeyman of the Design Department, he happened to be extremely competent when he was working within his area of expertise.

Considering his deep love, passion and affinity for spearman mechs, he even took over the responsibility of leading the upgrade project.

"I've always wanted to fix your Riot." Dulo plainly said as his expression grew a bit disgusted as he scanned the Riot in front of him. "No offensive, boss, but you and your wife don't really understand the finer points about spearman mechs. Whenever I look at your Riot, I don't see a spearman mech. I see a swordsman mech that you have awkwardly modified in an attempt to improve its performance with spears. This is an unacceptable result in my opinion. An expert mech deserves better."

Ves did not mind being told that his work was bad. He was afraid that no one would criticize his design choices. If no one identified any problems, it became a lot harder to improve his mech design any further!

"You're right, Dulo. I will leave this project in your hands. Feel free to set the direction of this upgrade project and gain ownership over the Riot. My only demands are that you must retain the original character of the Riot as much as possible while also respecting the wishes of Venerable Orfan."

Dulo confidently smiled while crossing his arms. "Expert mech or not, it is easy for me to improve the Riot in many aspects. Just wait until I am done with it. Thank you for entrusting this upgrade project to me, sir. It means a lot to me that you feel reassured with letting me make decisions on an expert mech that originally belongs to you and your wife."

While Ves still cared about the Riot, he acknowledged that he and his wife weren't the best mech designers to care for it anymore.

Just like how Ketis marked the First Sword as her exclusive territory, it was not that bad of an idea to make a Journeyman who specialized in spearman mechs responsible for continuing the development of the Riot.

It was only in the hands of a mech designer that was truly passionate about this mech type that the Riot would be able to maximize its potential as an expert mech!

Under Dulo Voiken's leadership, the Riot gained a new design direction that primarily focused on increasing all of its parameters while preserving what made it strong and special in the first place.

Aside from investing a substantial amount of design resources to improve its ability to launch stronger and faster spear attacks, the new Riot already gained a defensive makeover, courtesy of Dulo's sister.

The improvement to its armor system solved a weakness that had increasingly been weighing Venerable Orfan down.

With the new ExTrans Armor System, the Riot fully regained its ability to fight on even ground against the First Sword!

Though Venerable Dise's expert mech received its own enhancements, they were not as drastic as the Design Department did not opt to replace the First Sword's Unending alloy system. Sara Voiken merely optimized it so that it became a bit more effective at doing its job.

The overall result of upgrading the Riot and the First Sword was that their differences had grown greater than before.

Previously, Ves did not fault people too much if they thought the two offensive melee mechs performed almost identical to each other.

Even though Ves clearly knew that this wasn't the truth, it was hard for laymen to understand all of the design choices that made the two different.

There shouldn't be any ambiguity anymore after both of them had been upgraded to their 2.0 versions.

The Riot improved in a way that pushed it deeper onto the path of frontline assaults. It could serve as the tip of the spear and could confidently fight against other powerful expert mechs head-on by relying on its massively improved defensive capabilities!

Whenever the upgraded versions of the Riot and First Sword dueled against each other inside the simulated arenas of the MSTS, Venerable Orfan finally found it easier to cope with her friend and rival's sharp and penetrating sword techniques!

Unlike before where the First Sword could pierce straight through the Riot's original two-stage armor system with a single well-placed power attack, this time the former had to grind the expert spearman down over time!

By utilizing the new ExTrans Armor System as a powerful damage sponge, Venerable Orfan became a lot more capable of biting back by adopting a strategy of trading blows!

Of course, Ves didn't particularly approve of the destructive and wasteful fighting style that she developed to cope with powerful mech duelists.

"I know it is fun to pretend your expert mech is invincible while whacking away at an enemy expert mech, but our clan can't possibly sustain so much attrition." Ves warned her one day. "Don't forget that it is extremely troublesome to fabricate the transphasic armor plating. While I have already ordered additional quantities in order to facilitate repairs after a hard-fought battle, it is not worthwhile for us to stockpile an entire mountain's worth of redundant mech parts."

Venerable Orfan didn't take his words that seriously. "I will see what I can do, but... I would rather return from the battlefield with an expensive repair bill than let my enemies go free."

"...Just do your best to preserve the integrity of the ExTrans Armor System."

After spending many hours on familiarizing and mastering all of the changes of the Riot Version 2.0, Venerable Orfan finally had an opportunity to put her new capabilities to use on the battlefield!

From the moment the grand melee in the center began, Venerable Orfan and Venerable Dise had teamed up with each other.

They had fought many duels against each other within the MSTs, but they had also fought thousands of simulated battles alongside each other.

The two complimented each other well.

The Riot excelled at frontal combat and was not afraid of taking hits.

The Second Sword was much faster at taking down opponents but wasn't great at taking blows.

As the pair of Larkinson expert mechs began to approach the enemy lines, they hadn't encountered any Sundered Phalanx expert mechs in the immediate area.

"Hm. This is troublesome." Venerable Dise said. "The nearest detected enemy expert mech is too far away. If we leave this area, we will be exposing all nearby friendly troops to danger."

Venerable Orfan grinned. "There's no need for us to head to our targets. We can draw them over."

"How?"

"Isn't it obvious? Kill as many enemy mechs as possible!"

Venerable Orfan and the Riot began to resonate to a greater degree as they both became excited at the slaughter that they intended to commit against their foes!

Unlike some expert pilots, Rosa Orfan had no qualms about bullying the weak. The battlefield was inherently cruel. As a former mech officer of the Flagrant Vandals, she adhered to the philosophy that any means should be used to win a battle!

With that excuse in mind, Venerable Orfan laughed as her powerful glowing orange expert spearman mech crashed into the defensive lines of the 2003rd Medallion Guards Mech Division!

While the Medallion Guards had earned a lot of achievements during the Komodo War, it wasn't actually among the strongest enemy mech divisions in the field.

Their mechs were still based on outdated models that adequately fulfilled their purpose during the Komodo War but fell a bit short in an environment such as the Red Ocean.

However, as long as the Medallion Guard mechs relied on their thick and sturdy mechs to hold the line like the more well-equipped Pima Defenders Mech Division, the old but reliable defensive mechs could still hold back the mech units of Hex Army!

If no one else intervened on this part of the battlefield, the two sides would have probably grinded each other down at a relatively glacial pace.

The violent entry of the Riot changed all of that at once!

It did not even need to resort to its spear to destroy the Medallion Guard mechs. Just crashing into them with the help of the Riot's powerful and violent resonance shield was enough to shock them into disability!

"Hahahaha! Your mechs are as fragile as dolls! Come fight me, Fridaymen!"

The veteran mech pilots of the Medallion Guards weren't foolish enough to gang up on the Riot.

They quickly attempted to distance their machines from the opposing expert spearman mech in order to limit the damage, but the problem was that their relatively slow defensive machines had no chance of outrunning an expert mech that had become even faster after receiving an upgrade to its flight system!

The Fridayman mech pilots that were closest to the Riot had the illusion that they weren't fighting against an expert mech, but instead got in the way of a massive, primal warbeast!

"Monster! It's a monster!"

"Don't try to stand in its way!"

"Eject! Eject as early as possible! Don't throw your lives away!"

One of the strangest aspects about the Riot was that its design spirit was Qilanxo. This was an unusual choice given that it was an offensive melee mech, but Qilanxo was not a cuddly little lizard that only knew how to protect.

When combined with the Riot and under the purposeful development of Venerable Orfan, Qilanxo's aura had slowly morphed and mutated into a more primal and aggressive variation.

As Venerable Orfan became increasingly more immersed in the slaughter that she was committing, her mind and will achieved an even greater state of resonance with Qilanxo!

The shadow of a giant lizard briefly flickered behind the Riot as it continued to demolish at least half-a-dozen regular mechs with each passing second.

The glow and resonance shield surrounding the Riot grew more aggressive and violent as it seemed as if the expert pilot and expert mech had transformed into the personification of an exobeast!

"Kill! Kill! Kill!"

Venerable Orfan's only regret was that she didn't excel at mass destruction. The Riot's killing efficiency was a bit low compared to numerous other Larkinson expert mechs.

Unlike Venerable Dise, Venerable Orfan had not developed any fancy spear techniques that allowed her to throw out wide-area energy attacks. Charging her Riot forward and colliding against packed enemy mech formations was the only way for her to cause enough damage to completely disarray the Medallion Guards.

Her efforts were creating the desired effect. It only took a single minute of charging through the enemy defensive lines that hundreds of Medallion Guard mechs had fallen, which also implicated the formations of thousands of other Fridayman mechs!

This was the horror of an expert mech when left unopposed by an opponent that was at least close to its level.

Through the advantages created by the Riot, the Hexer mechs that had previously entered into a stalemate against the Medallion Guards were now gaining a massive advantage!

It wasn't until the Riot crushed another enemy mech company that a powerful resonance-enhanced gauss round collided against the rampaging Larkinson expert mech!

"Hah! We've caught a big fish this time!"

The Sundered Phalanx hadn't dispatched any of its low-tier or mid-tier expert mechs to reinforce the Medallion Guards.

Instead, the Fridaymen directly sent over one of their rare but powerful high-tier expert mechs, one that originally hailed from the Medallion Guards!

Venerable Orfan instantly recognized the powerful expert hybrid mech that sought to end her killing spree.

She smirked. "I've been waiting for you, Shockshell."

Chapter 4276 Venerable Rebecca Andus

The Medallion Guards was one of the more celebrated mech divisions of the Sundered Phalanx.

Their martial tradition placed a great emphasis on defense and steady attrition warfare.

While their approach towards battle didn't exactly sound flashy or exciting, the advantages they accrued during the Komodo War proved that the Medallion Guards grasped a winning formula!

Plenty of other Fridayman mech divisions suffered crippling losses because their leaders and soldiers took risks and launched attacks against the ferocious Hexers.

The Medallion Guards did not go along with this approach but stuck to its own slow but steady strategies.

It worked for the most part. Though there were times where the Medallion Guards endured the brunt of Hexer offensives, the core of the mech division had never broken, allowing its units to recuperate quickly and fight another battle.

The Medallion Guards therefore earned more and more awards and honors as the Komodo War progressed.

By the end of this great conflict, the Gauge Dynasty had put the Medallion Guards on the list of units to be transferred to the Red Ocean.

This was a great honor. Its members along with their families overwhelmingly accepted the generous offer and moved to the Friday Colonies in the expectation of becoming part of the new colonial elite.

The early colonists might even have a chance of becoming a part of the landowners, industry magnates and other powerful individuals of a colony!

In the meantime, the Medallion Guards were on the waiting list to undergo a complete renewal of its mech rosters. Several mech divisions had already received this treatment so it wouldn't take more than a couple of years to replace swap 10,000 outdated mechs with 10,000 modern mechs.

Regretfully, Task Force Fury and the Golden Skull Alliance preempted this move, thereby putting the Medallion Guards in an awkward position!

Their mechs stood no chance against the Riot. The only meaningful damage they could do was slightly exhaust the Riot's resonance shield as the enemy expert spearman mech used its bulk and momentum to smash the Medallion Guard mechs in their way.

Even then, the armor and structural strength of their outdated mechs had fallen so far behind that they didn't even hurt the Riot all that much!

The Sundered Phalanx had to take action immediately or else Venerable Orfan would single-handedly be able to collapse the Medallion Guards before they played out their roles!

Venerable Orfan already had a goal in mind when her Riot brazenly tore through the Medallion Guard lines.

The old but honored mech division happened to produce an old but powerful high-tier expert pilot.

Venerable Rebecca Andus started out as a relatively unassuming mech pilot almost a century ago. Back then, large-scale wars were rare and most soldiers were only able to gain combat experience by going on expeditions.

It was a lot more difficult for mech pilots and expert pilots to progress in such a relatively peaceful environment, but Rebecca Andus didn't seem to obey this rule.

No one knew how she did it exactly, but she broke through the ranks at a steady and consistent pace.

She took around a decade to advance to expert candidate.

She took another decade to undergo apotheosis.

After that, her growth rate had slowed down, but her resonance strength grew by at least 1 laveres with each passing year, only slowing down as she began to near the 50's.

According to the intelligence leaks that the Larkinsons obtained, Venerable Rebecca's resonance strength measured at 57.3 laveres.

This was an extremely dangerous figure, and wasn't that much lower than that of Patriarch Reginald shortly before he became a new Saint!

No matter whether the reported number was true or not, Venerable Rebecca had become a powerful and respected expert pilot after all of these years.

In fact, her threat towards the Hexers and the Golden Skullers was greater than her current status implied!

Her long precipitation, her relative ease in overcoming her bottlenecks, her advanced age and wisdom, her abundant battle experience by participating in the Komodo War all added up to a frightening possibility.

Venerable Rebecca Andus had a high chance of being an ace pilot candidate!

Of course, the status of ace pilot candidate was merely an informal designation, but this notorious label nonetheless represented a horrifying risk factor.

If her enemies ever pushed and stimulated her in battle to a certain degree, Venerable Rebecca had a small but real chance of advancing to ace pilot!

Every mech pilot of the Golden Skull Alliance only had to recall the powerful explosion of Patriarch Reginald when he test piloted the Mars for the first time to understand how such a calamity could completely swing the battle in the favor of the enemy!

An outcome like this had to be prevented at all costs. No one was willing to gamble whether the Larkinson Clan's powerful battle formations were capable of overcoming Venerable Rebecca's second breakthrough event!

"No one knows how much potential this high-tier expert pilot has left." Ves explained to his Larkinson expert pilots during a meeting. "She's 120 years old and that is definitely on the older side as far as expert pilots are concerned, but at this stage of her evolution I'm not sure the decline of her body matters that much anymore. We have to assume that she will be in her peak condition when she enters into battle."

"How do we fight against such a monster?" Venerable Joshua furrowed his brows. "From what you're telling us, we can't press Venerable Rebecca too hard because we risk helping her advance to ace pilot. On the other hand, if we hold back too much and don't fight at our best, there is a great chance she'll beat us in battle!"

Everyone else looked grave when they thought about how they should possibly handle such a situation.

"What you are describing is a great dilemma that has plagued many mech forces." Ves calmly said. "There is no obvious solution here. All I can say is

that you need to judge the situation and aim for stability rather than victory. The usual approach to fighting against ace pilot candidates is to achieve small advantages and slowly boil the frog in water. If necessary, you should always offer your opponent an escape path and you should never cross your enemy's bottom line. Understanding Venerable Rebecca's character and conviction is crucial to containing her on the battlefield."

Ves and his expert pilots spent a bit of time discussing how they should handle Venerable Rebecca Andus in particular.

"Personally, I don't think it is necessary to defeat her. The difficulty of defeating her is too great since she is a genuine high-tier expert pilot who is matched with a new and modern high-tier expert mech. If beating her is too risky, then it is better to focus on containment. Lock her expert mech in place and wait for other friendly units to carry the battle. Our side might be lacking when it comes to high-tier expert mechs, but I believe we possess a great advantage at the low-tier to mid-tier expert mech duels."

Ves understood his own mechs extremely well and did not think they were inferior to the expert mechs of the Sundered Phalanx!

After enough discussions about this topic, Ves transitioned to a more interesting topic.

"This is the design schematic as well as an image capture of the Shockshell." Ves said as he summoned a new set of projections. "Before I go any further, let me warn you that you should take these details with a grain of salt. Most mech organizations tend to guard the secrets of their high-tier expert mechs quite well. I cannot say whether the intelligence leaks and the additional information collected by our spies can be relied upon. My gut feeling says that the overall concept and configuration are correct, but that the details might not be fully accurate or complete."

Everyone stared closely at the appearance of the Shockshell. Its dull, grayish blue coloration was broken up by bright yellow stripes.

The name and the color scheme of the Shockshell already said a lot about how it was designed to fight!

"It's a hybrid mech." Venerable Tusa stated the obvious. "It vaguely looks like Patriarch Reginald's Bolvos Rage, though with a different weapon loadout."

Venerable Riot gazed admiringly at the Fridayman expert mech. "It looks really powerful, though I'm wondering what those weird rods on the chest can do. Are they weapons?"

Ves smiled. "It is not wrong to compare the Shockshell to the Bolvos Rage. I believe that the overall combat power and weight of fire between the two mechs are roughly similar to each other. This means that if you can't beat the Bolvos Rage, you won't be able to beat the Shockshell."

"If we had to fight this expert mech a few years ago, we wouldn't have stood a chance. Times are different now." Venerable Dise confidently said.

"Yeah. Our expert mechs are all stronger than before."

"Don't underestimate the Shockshell." Ves warned. "Our Design Department might have upgraded your expert mechs, but the Sundered Phalanx has also given Venerable Rebecca a brand-new expert mech that is developed according to heartland-level standards. Take these weapon modules for example. The shock hammer, the concussion shield and the shoulder-mounted gauss cannons are all transphasic, and not sparingly either. Whether it is up close or in a distance, the Shockshell possesses a notable amount of penetration capabilities."

That instantly caused everyone to grow serious again. According to the intelligence they possessed the Sundered Phalanx had already begun to phase in transphasic tech into the latest batch of expert mechs.

There was no reason to believe the Gauge Dynasty had skipped over the Shockshell In this regard!

"How powerful are these transphasic weapons?" Venerable Dise asked.

"Unknown. We don't have any sources that state how much phasewater is put into those weapon systems, but you should assume that the Gaugers have put a medium quantity into them. More is better but I don't believe the Gauge Dynasty is willing to squander so much phasewater on an individual mech. You can see that by the fact that its wrist-mounted positron cannons, the electrorods integrated in the chest and its electrified legs are not transphasic."

The Shockshell was much less luxurious than the initial version of the Mars. The level of commitment and the allocation of resources simply weren't on the same level!

Of course, that was not to say the Shockshell was weak by regional standards.

The Mars was simply too perverted to be used as a standard!

Ves pointed at the other parts of the Shockshell. "Take note of the relatively thick armor plating of this expert hybrid mech. This is the typical configuration of a short-to-medium range assault machine. According to one source, the Gaugers have invested 1.8 kilograms of phasewater to impart its armor system with transphasic properties. Regular attacks will have a difficult time penetrating through its armor, so your best chance to take it out is to target its weak points, not that it will be easy. Even the weakest parts of this expert mech are reinforced."

All of this meant that the Shockshell possessed both strong offensive and defensive properties.

The only shortcoming of its design was that its mobility was relatively mediocre when compared to other high-tier expert mechs. However, it was still a lot faster than many other expert mechs!

"It's impossible for any of us to fight against the Shockshell one-on-one." Commander Casella concluded after they all gained a good idea on what Venerable Rebecca and her new and powerful expert mech were capable of. "We might have a chance if we have a high-tier expert pilot and expert mech at our disposal, but that is not the case. At minimum, we need two expert mechs to force it into a stalemate, and at least one of them needs to possess formidable defenses."

There weren't many Larkinson expert mechs that matched the latter demand. Everyone looked at each other before Venerable Orfan broke the silence.

"You can leave it to me. I'm not afraid of getting zapped. My Riot can take anything the Shockshell can dish out!" She confidently boasted.

Whether that was true or not remained to be seen, but at least she possessed enough fighting intent!

Chapter 4277 Shockshell

The Shockshell's entry onto the battlefield attracted a lot of attention.

The flagging morale of the Medallion Guard mech pilots instantly revived once their powerful hero had come forth to protect them against their evil opponents.

"Venerable Rebecca has finally come!"

"Shockshell!"

"Shockshell!"

"Shockshell!"

It was odd to see so much enthusiasm and fanaticism bursting from the Fridayman mech pilots. The Shockshell hadn't even launched a proper attack as of yet, but the Medallion Guards already believed that their hero would lead them to victory.

The status that Venerable Rebecca Andus had built up within the Medallion Guards and the rest of the Sundered Phalanx for that matter was comparable to that of Patriarch Reginald Cross before his second major breakthrough!

This was because ace pilots were so rare and difficult to reach that the soldiers flocked to expert pilots instead.

The Medallion Guards revered Venerable Rebecca to such a degree that the powerful expert pilot might as well be a god in their eyes!

From the moment the Shockshell burst onto the forefront, the high-tier expert mech seemed to have stopped most of the fighting through its presence alone.

Aside from the enormous awe and respect the Sundered Phalanx mech pilots directed towards Venerable Rebecca, the other reason why so many individuals at this section of the battlefield held their fire was because of the incredibly destructive fight that was about to commence!

The Medallion Guard mechs did not stupidly freeze in place. They instead pushed their current orders aside and did their best to open up a lot of distance from the the Shockshell.

Just because they revered Venerable Rebecca didn't meant that they were eager to commit suicide!

Expert hybrid mechs possessed a lot of firepower. Even if their pilots tried their best not to commit friendly fire, it was too difficult to ensure the Shockshell wouldn't affect its own side!

The Medallion Guards were not alone in their risk assessment.

All of the nearby Hexer mech units did not seek to press their advantages but instead flew back in order to avoid getting attacked by mistake.

A strange lull had descended on this part of the battlefield as the Riot and the First Sword suspended their attacks and distanced themselves from the enemy battle line.

It was as if the entire section of space had turned into an invisible mech arena!

The Medallion Guards clearly served as the spectators of the home team. Their strong support and belief in Venerable Rebecca Andus and her Shockshell seemed to generate a wave of human energy that charged the surrounding air with an atmosphere of victory!

Venerable Orfan and Venerable Dise were sensitive enough to notice the differences. The swing in momentum was so great that they found it difficult to maintain their previous high spirits.

"The rumors truly weren't overblown." Orfan said. "Rebecca Andus has honed and refined her willpower to the same degree as Patriarch Reginald back then. I feel like she can break through so long as I sneeze in the wrong direction."

Dise wasn't as intimidated, though. "Don't overestimate her too much. How can it be easy to push through the bottleneck to ace pilot? She is just an older and more developed expert pilot than us. We can neutralize her step-by-step as long as we follow the plan."

It was easy to talk about executing plans when they were theorizing about how to tackle a high-tier expert mech.

It was a lot harder to put their plan into action!

While Venerable Orfan and Venerable Dise weren't rookies among expert pilots, it was undeniable that they lacked decades of steady growth and precipitation.

Compared to an old expert pilot who had lived almost thrice as many years as two Larkinson expert pilots, the difference in accumulation was too great!

If Venerable Orfan and Venerable Dise could be compared to moons, then Venerable Rebecca clearly showed the momentum of a star!

Both Larkinson expert pilots understood that fixating on this image would cause them to lose this clash before they even launched an attack against the Shockshell.

If they wanted to fight against Venerable Rebecca Andus without getting suppressed by her overwhelming confidence, then they needed to rebuild their mental edge in this confrontation!

Fortunately, neither Larkinson expert pilots were weak when it came to their willingness to challenge powerful foes.

"Tch! Are you done posturing, you woman?!" Venerable Orfan irreverently broadcasted on an open channel.

Though Venerable Dise did not bother to join in the banter, she was ready to move from the moment that one of the expert mechs made an aggressive move.

In response to the words spoken by Orfan, the expert pilot of the Medallion Guards shot back her own question.

"Why do you fight us, Larkinsons? We have no direct quarrel with you anymore. The Komodo War has ended years ago. Whatever grievances have built up between us should have been buried after the end of the war."

"No one has buried the hatchet and you know it." Venerable Orfan sneered. "The Komodo War in the old galaxy may have ended, but the fighting has never stopped. In fact, what we're doing here is nothing but the second or third act of that war."

"Your arguments are spurious and inaccurate. You Larkinsons are just warmongers who have never had to face the consequences of their own action. From the moment I asked you why you have taken up the piloting profession, neither of the two of you have volunteered an answer. It seems you still have far to go before becoming qualified to challenge my expert mech and I. My Shockshell does not exist to get beaten by your trashy expert mechs."

Venerable Orfan's eyes widened. "What did you say?! Who are you calling trash?! My Riot is one of the best mechs on this battlefield! High-tier expert pilot or not, I will not allow you to insult my battle partner! Let me show you which mech is the real piece of trash in the field!"

She became so stimulated by Venerable Rebecca's demeaning and dismissive words that her anger exploded!

All thoughts of holding back and trying to contain her opponents got dumped through the airlock.

The only overpowering thought and desire in her mind was to beat up this arrogant Fridayman expert pilot to the point where her enemy had no other choice than to admit that the Riot was a great mech!

Perhaps the expert spearman mech strongly agreed with Venerable Orfan's ideas, because the Riot actively played along to the best of its ability, thereby deepening the resonance between each other!

Due to its recent upgrade, the Riot's charging ability had become better than ever. It could even perform as a discounted version of an expert lancer mech if it was allowed to build up enough momentum!

Though the people who were viewing this battle from afar only saw that the Riot had launched an impulsive charge against a considerably stronger opponent, the mech pilots viewing this upcoming confrontation saw it much differently!

The fighting intent amplified by the true resonance emanating from the expert mech radiated through the surrounding space, causing many nearby Fridayman and Hexer mech pilots to have the illusion that the Riot had grown into a raging exobeast over the course of its charge!

Such a powerful outburst of fighting intent could instantly sap the courage of those who had the misfortune of becoming her targets, but Venerable Rebecca was different!

Her powerful willpower only condensed even more, causing the true resonance around the Shockshell to expand into a prototypical domain field.

"Beast." Venerable Rebecca's contempt had never faded. "An expert pilot that has descended into savagery is no soldier at all. You are just a barbarian that has given in to the most primitive parts of your immature mind. Putting down feral beasts like you is exactly what I am meant to do. Let me show you what real power looks like!"

Blessed by her powerful resonance strength and willpower tempered over the course of many decades, the aura she generated with her Shockshell was incomparably greater than that of her opponent!

Venerable Rebecca's domain was clearly biased towards shock, electricity and other related means of debilitation.

This caused the blue corona around her expert mech to crackle and sizzle as if it had become charged with electrical energy.

Not only that, but a good amount of space around the Shockshell seemed to turn into an artificial thunderstorm!

Venerable Rebeccas was imposing her entire force of will in the immediate area!

It was as if she was wordlessly declaring that every enemy that dared to trespass her territory would get struck by a thunderous rebuke!

Though Venerable Orfan came under vastly more pressure, she did not show any timidity or signs of inferiority.

Combat at this level was no longer solely about possessing the strongest mechs or having the best technical skills.

As expert pilots became increasingly more detached from their mortal roots, the elements of willpower and mentality played an increasingly more important role.

This was why it was always possible for those paired with weaker expert mechs to defeat those who utilized stronger ones!

A technical advantage might raise the threshold of getting defeated, but if the pilot itself did not possess a sufficient amount of courage and intent, then such a powerful machine was wasted in his or her hands!

This was also why large mech organizations refrained from providing powerful expert mechs to their younger and more inexperienced low-tier expert pilots.

Economics played one part of the decision to hold back. Another part was that starting off with a more basic expert mech was an important tempering process for newly advanced expert pilots.

While Venerable Orfan did not go through this process, she was anything but a fragile warrior.

In response to the obvious contempt shown by her opponent, she became even more determined to beat the Shockshell!

"BREAK FOR ME!" She roared as her Riot was about to slam into the Shockshell!

From the start of the Riot's charge, the Shockshell had yet to launch any attack. The naked contempt emanating from the expert hybrid mech was extremely insulting, but there was a reason why Venerable Rebecca was confident!

Just as the Riot entered the vague boundary that Venerable Rebecca had marked as her territory, the Shockshell finally exploded into action!

First, the powerful presence emanating from the Shockshell surged and solidified a bit, causing the space around the machine to turn into an illusionary storm cloud!

The powerful determination from a high-tier expert pilot pressed onto the Riot directly pressed onto Venerable Orfan's willpower, causing her mind to get jolted to the point where her concentration got interrupted!

"Ah!"

Concurrently, the Shockshell finally opened fire with all of its ranged weapons!

First, it raised its wrists and fired a pair of resonance-empowered positron beams that not only damaged the Riot's resonance shield, but also imparted a disrupting force to it that destabilized it even further.

Second, the shoulder-mounted gauss cannons fired a small but surprisingly powerful salvo that thundered against the Riot's first layer of defense.

The twin blows pounded the Riot like hammers, which visibly caused the expert spearman mech to falter in its charge!

Third and most devastatingly, the electrorods that minutely stuck out of the torso of the Shockshell began to unleash several streams of thick blue arcs of lightning that directly struck the incoming Riot, causing its entire resonance shield to wobble and strain as if it was being tortured!

Enhanced by Venerable Rebecca's highly refined will and resonance strength, these material attacks were also accompanied by metaphysical attacks, which interrupted Venerable Orfan's focus to such a degree that she had lost her earlier momentum!

In the brief time that Venerable Orfan became debilitated, the Shockshell had smoothly flown to the side, allowing it to evade the Riot's faltering charge with surprising ease!

Of course, the Shockshell did not forget to strike the vulnerable Riot with its shock hammer while it passed through.

"Thunder Strike!"

A blinding electrical explosion erupted from the Riot's resonance shield as the shock hammer struck!

Even though Venerable Rebecca hadn't activated any of the transphasic functions of the weapons at her disposal, her Shockshell already showcased a hint of the power of an ace pilot!

Chapter 4278 Double Teamed

The Riot clearly fell into a disadvantage during its first clash against the Shockshell.

Fortunately, the Larkinson expert spearman mech wasn't fighting against this Fridayman expert hybrid mech alone!

"Rosa!"

While the Shockshell had been preoccupied with bullying the Riot, the First Sword had already circled around and snuck up to the enemy expert mech's rear!

Yet just as the First Sword was about to launch its attack, the Shockshell abruptly turned in a 90 degree angle and pushed out with its rectangular concussion shield.

"Repulsion Wave!"

Venerable Rebecca resonated with the solid object to such an extent that it had actually released an enlarged, rectangular-shaped shockwave that completely engulfed and shoved the First Sword away!

Both the Riot and the First Sword quickly opened up a bit of distance from the Shockshell.

Though her expert mech was not too far off from what they imagined, Venerable Rebecca's power, strength, mastery and willpower vastly exceeded their expectations!

"The intelligence briefings didn't say that she was strong to this extent!" Venerable Orfan complained.

"Look at the resonance meter, Rosa. She's not at 57.3 laveres. I'm afraid that she has already reached 61.1 laveres!"

Even though the difference sounded minimal, in reality there was a large gap in power due to how much closer Venerable Rebecca had approached the threshold to ace pilot.

"How could she have changed so much?!"

Venerable Rebecca clearly sensed the alarm and confusion from her foes.

"Saint Jeremiah Gauge personally guided me in the past several months. My way forward has never been clearer to me. The great Saint's teachings have given me the insights that I need to forge my own path to ascension!"

From what it sounded like, Venerable Rebecca truly embodied the meaning of an ace pilot candidate!

Fighting her was at least several times more dangerous than the Larkinsons predicted!

Venerable Orfan and Venerable Dise both felt more pressured than ever. They hadn't accounted for the possibility that Saint Jeremiah Gauge would spend his valuable time on guiding Venerable Rebecca's growth.

This was a horrible advantage and one that granted a second-rate state a decisive advantage against weaker groups!

As long as a state managed to nurture its first ace pilot with great difficulty and investment, it was not unusual for more ace pilots to emerge in small batches.

This was why the Gauge Dynasty found it essential to transfer at least one of their precious ace pilots to the Red Ocean.

Perhaps Venerable Rebecca Andus had been specifically transferred to the new frontier in order to increase her chances of breaking through to ace pilot!

"Calm down, Rosa." Venerable Dise urged her friend and peer. "Venerable Rebecca is too strong for us to defeat in a short amount of time. We should return to our original plan and focus on containment as opposed to winning. Let's wear down our opponent's defenses while waiting for further opportunities."

"Got it." Venerable Orfan growled as she forcefully adjusted her mentality.

The Larkinson expert pilot might be eager to gain another victory, but she wasn't stupid. The difference in power was too great for her to gain an

advantage. This wasn't a weak expert pilot and expert mech that she could just bull through by relying on brute force. She needed to adopt a more realistic strategy in order to gain more opportunities.

Venerable Orfan and Venerable Dise did not communicate any further with each other because they knew exactly what they needed to do. Both of them controlled their expert mechs so that they constantly surrounded the Shockshell from opposing sides.

Occasionally, laser beams or gauss rounds struck the resonance shields of all three expert mechs, but their expert pilots completely disregarded the attacks.

All three of them knew that unless an entire mech regiment's worth of ranged mechs opened fire upon them, it was difficult to pose a serious threat to the powerful machines!

Other attackers at least had to wait until the resonance shields of their targets had worn down before it became more viable to defeat an expert mech through sustained bombardment.

This meant that the three expert mechs were effectively on their own unless another expert mech intervened.

The two Larkinson expert mechs began their steady assault on the Shockshell.

Both Venerable Orfan and Venerable Dise displayed excellent coordination when their machines dove in to attack the Shockshell at the same time.

No matter the strength of an expert pilot or expert mech, it was always a bit difficult to fend off attacks coming from two different directions.

However, the Shockshell under the control of its extremely skilled and strong-willed pilot was different!

The shoulder-mounted gauss cannons actually flipped over so that they could fire at targets approaching from the rear.

At the same time the Shockshell fired streams of destructive streams of lightning at the Riot that was approaching from the front, the gauss cannons unleashed a powerful salvo of heavy kinetic rounds that accurately slammed against the First Sword's resonance shield despite Venerable Dise's best attempts to evade the attacks!

"The Shockshell is able to defend itself against two expert mechs at once!"

"Venerable Rebecca is too unreasonable!"

As the two Larkinson expert mechs enduring the punishing attacks and got close enough to swing their weapons, the Shockshell easily fended off the incoming attacks by turning its frame sideways in order to block the incoming strikes with its shock hammer and concussion shield!

Powerful sparks of energy burst from the contact points as all of the expert pilots involved had invested a lot of true resonance in their moves!

The thunderstorm surrounding the Shockshell lost cohesion for a moment, but quickly regained its vigor, allowing Venerable Rebecca's willpower to constantly shock and paralyze her opponents on a mental level!

The Larkinson expert pilots tried their best to endure the zaps to their minds and will and forcefully attacked the Shockshell as many times as possible!

Though Venerable Rebecca was able to block most of the incoming blows by utilizing both of her expert mech's handheld equipment, she could not block every incoming strike, particularly those launched by the First Sword.

The difference in skill and technique became clear. Venerable Orfan clearly wasn't as refined in her weapon handling, but each of her spear strikes landed

with such great force that they could still accelerate the breakdown of the Shockshell's resonance shield.

Venerable Dise was much more successful in her attempts to outplay her opponent and land effective attacks.

This didn't matter too much for the moment because the Shockshell's resonance shield covered all of its weak points.

Once the Larkinson expert pilots wore through this barrier, Venerable Dise would definitely be able to pose a greater threat to the expert hybrid mech!

However, after repeated attacks, both Larkinson expert pilots realized that it would take a lot of effort to exhaust the Shockshell's resonance shield!

This was also just its first line of defense. The Fridayman expert mech also boasted a transphasic armor system!

"Goddamnit! This Shockshell is constantly trying to fry me and paralyze me when I've entered its rage." Venerable Orfan grumbled as her latest flurry of spear strikes got blocked by her opponent. "This damn concussion shield constantly bounces back against my spear. It's disrupting my rhythm!"

Amazingly, Venerable Rebecca did not show any obvious sign that she was exceeding her mental capacity.

She always kept her expert mech at an angle where it was able to block the attacks from the enemy expert mechs no matter their positioning.

Venerable Rebecca even had enough multitasking capacity left to independently control her Shockshell's gauss cannons to slam rounds into both of her opponents at the same time!

With the help of dimensional magazines, the Shockshell was not short on gauss rounds. The expert hybrid mech did not hold back at all in its attempts to bombard its two targets.

Though the gauss rounds were not powerful enough to pose a serious threat against the Riot and the First Sword, each successful strike came paired with an electrifying explosion, which disrupted the operation of the two Larkinson expert mechs!

"This Shockshell is constantly disrupting our rhythm." Venerable Dise said.

"We cannot go through with our current approach. Even though Venerable Rebecca is targeting both of us at the same time, our expert mechs will lose their resonance shields first. We can't let that happen!"

Venerable Orfan did not enjoy the suppression that she was under. The fact that Venerable Rebecca did not even concentrate fully on her Riot was an insult to her pride as a expert pilot and warrior!

"Face me, Shockshell!"

She did not hesitate any longer and resonated with Qilanxo in a special and specific way.

Slowly but surely, the darker blue corona surrounding the Riot grew wilder and less restrained.

The Riot gripped its spear further up its shaft, which effectively shortened its attack reach.

This allowed the Riot to press up closer to the Shockshell!

As soon as the Riot got close enough, the resonance shields of the two opposing mechs began to touch and interact with each other.

Though the resonance shield surrounding the Shockshell was much stronger than that of the Riot, the strangest part was that the Shockshell actually started showing signs of destabilizing at a greater rate!

"Your expert mech is weird." Venerable Rebecca immediately noticed.

This confrontation was the first time that Venerable Orfan applied her Disharmony Barrier prime ability against an opposing expert mech on an actual battlefield!

"Hahahaha! You're not the only one who can mess with opponents this way!" Venerable Orfan gloated as she saw that her powerful trick had taken effect!

The Riot's inherently chaotic nature seemed to contaminate the Shockshell's purer and more orderly resonance shield.

It was as if the Riot had thrown a dead insect into the Shockshell's soup. It only took a small disruption to ruin the entire dish!

However, Venerable Rebecca was far from helpless under this situation. She quickly recognized the risks of allowing the Riot to proceed in this manner and turned her Shockshell so that its concussion shield faced the expert spearman mech.

Venerable Orfan already had a hunch of what was coming.

"Not this move again!"

"REPULSION WAVE!"

Another wall of solidified force slammed against the Riot and pushed it over a hundred meters away!

The Shockshell wasn't done, however. As soon as the Riot no longer interfered with its actions, the Fridayman expert mech immediately turned to the First Sword and struck with great violence!

The shoulder-mounted gauss cannons fired a powerful salvo of rounds that impacted the First Sword!

The chest-mounted electrorods engulfed the First Sword in an electrical storm!

The wrist-mounted positron beam cannons seared the First Sword's weakening resonance shield even further!

Finally, the Shockshell did not utilize its melee armaments but instead kicked against the First Sword's resonance shield with an electrified leg!

Getting hit by all of these resonance-empowered blows in quick succession put a serious strain on the First Sword's resonance shield!

This was bad as defense was not the First Sword's strongest quality.

As the Shockshell continued to blast the expert swordsman mech with as many attacks as it could feasibly unleash, the Riot charged over once again in order to relieve its sister mech.

"Leave my buddy alone!"

"REPULSION WAVE!"

The Riot was not an agile mech so there was no way for it to evade the expanding shockwave that was empowered by Venerable Rebecca's strong desire to get rid of Venerable Orfan's expert mech!

"Ahhhh!"

The Larkinsons didn't expect that the Shockshell could pull off such a powerful move on a repeated basis. It took a lot of effort to push away an expert mech by relying on the power of true resonance alone!

"This conceited woman needs to die!" Venerable Orfan roared in frustration as her frustration fueled her hatred against her current opponent. "You can't stop me forever, Rebecca!"

The Fridayman expert pilot smirked as she continued to direct her Shockshell to wear down the defenses of the First Sword.

"You might be right, but I will be able to clean up this expert swordsman mech first."

It was too difficult for the First Sword to fend off a high-tier expert mech by itself!

Chapter 4279 Repulsed

Those that never fought against a high-tier expert mech before could not truly understand the horror of such a powerful machine.

As long as it was paired with a genuine high-tier expert pilot, the resulting combination was so powerful that it occupied a different level!

When leaders and strategists talked about high-tier expert mechs, they clearly set these dangerous machines apart from every other category of mechs.

This was because high-tier expert mechs truly possessed the power to overturn an entire battle by themselves!

One of the greatest shortcomings of the attacking force was that neither the Hexers nor the Golden Skullers brought any high-tier expert mechs.

Both groups thought that they could handle these powerful threats as long as they dispatched two sufficiently powerful mid-tier expert mechs against them, but there were cases where this wasn't enough.

Right now, Venerable Orfan and Venerable Dise were definitely having a hard time contending against Venerable Rebecca Andus!

The hero of the Medallion Guards did not pilot a stodgy defensive mech like most of the Medallion Guards.

Instead, she piloted a formidable expert hybrid mech that possessed excellent control and offensive capabilities!

When Ves observed the powerful actions of the Shockshell, he became more and more concerned by its combat strength.

He opened a communication channel to the cockpit of the Mars in order to gain the input of its ace pilot.

"What do you think about Venerable Rebecca Andus and the Shockshell?" Ves straightforwardly asked.

"She is strong." Reginald said with clear respect in his tone. "It is difficult for expert pilots who are over a century old to maintain their fighting spirit and their belief that they can still go forward. There are many expert pilots who face inevitable stagnation and decline once they grow over a century old. We mech pilots envy you mech designers for being able to practice your craft for centuries without growing weaker. It is different for us. I believe Venerable Rebecca's body may have weakened long ago, but it is through her dogged and persistent willpower that she is forcefully uplifting her condition."

Ves frowned. That sounded impressive on her part, but that was not good news for the Larkinson Clan!

"What is the likelihood of her breaking through in your judgment?"

The projection of Patriarch Reginald shrugged. "My guess isn't much better than yours. Just because I am an ace pilot doesn't mean I understand what it takes for people to break through. Every expert pilot's condition is different. There is no universal solution aside from piloting a masterwork expert mech, and even that doesn't always work if the expert pilot has grown too weak."

Ves took another glance at the projection that displayed the Shockshell in action. Currently, it looked anything but weak. It not only managed to push away the Riot five times in a row, but also severely depleted the First Sword's resonance shield to the point it was already showing signs of collapsing!

"I think it is safe to assume that Venerable Rebecca's chances of breaking through are considerably higher than normal. If she breaks through..."

"Don't worry about it." Patriarch Reginald dismissively said. "I will take care of it. It won't take more than a few seconds."

"Reginald..."

"I know what I am talking about, Ves. More than you, at least. I only broke through a few years ago. I know what it is like to unleash all of the pent-up power that has been building up for several decades. I admit that Venerable Rebecca will be a lot more difficult to deal with once she obtains the power of forced resonance, but she won't be able to exert too much control over her strength. Aside from that, her expert mech is too weak. I will break her Shockshell even if Jeremiah Gauge shows up at the same time."

What hubris!

Ves truly couldn't understand why Patriarch Reginald talked about such a big game. Hadn't he learned anything from his deceased father about underestimating the enemy and growing too overconfident?

The older man's eager and bloodthirsty expression said it all. This ace pilot with a one track mind only cared about defeating more opponents at his level!

The appearance of an additional ace pilot on the battlefield didn't deter him in the slightest.

Instead, Reginald just wanted to secure the bragging rights of defeating 'two' ace pilots in his first battle as a Saint!

Clearly the battle maniac couldn't be relied upon. Ves closed the channel to Patriarch Reginald without a word and opened a new one to Venerable Stark.

"I'm busy now, kid!" The expert pilot barked.

The Fridaymen had been putting the Amaranto under pressure for a while now. Though the enemy expert mechs weren't able to get close to it yet, they were still capable of bombarding its position.

The Sundered Phalanx truly didn't want the Amaranto to pick off all of the opposing low and

Mid-tier expert mechs like the hapless Azure Vanquisher!

In fact, the suppression from mechs such as the Star of Liberation almost completely prevented the Amaranto from doing more than taking a few potshots at vulnerable enemy expert mechs.

The only consolation was that the Amaranto simultaneously restrained the Star of Liberation from doing the same to expert mechs of the attacking forces.

Ves understood that Venerable Stark's condition wasn't great at the moment, so he immediately came to the point.

"The Riot and the First Sword are having a difficult time against the Shockshell. Venerable Rebecca Andus has progressed further towards ace pilot than we anticipated. Can you take out the Shockshell in a single blow if the enemy expert pilot is close to breaking through?"

"...I can do it as long as the Shield of Samar provides me with protection. I also need you to give me a superboost."

"No problem." Ves quickly replied. "Venerable Jannzi is preoccupied with other matters currently, but her Shield of Samar is not too far away from you. She will definitely cooperate with you in order to save Venerable Orfan and Venerable Dise."

Although putting together the Amaranto with the Shield of Samar was a powerful combination, it was a waste to bring them together at this point.

The defensive capacity of the Shield of Samar was greater than practically every other machine aside from the ace mechs, but it was still a finite resource.

Right now, the Larkinson Clan would rather have the Amaranto take shelter within the nooks and crannies of its starships and have the enemy wear down these solid fixtures than deplete the Shield of Samar in advance.

Besides, Venerable Jannzi was indeed fulfilling an important function.

Not only was her expert mech guarding the core of the Larkinson Navy against sneak attacks with its powerful presence, it was also shielding the Spirit of Bentheim against enemy bombardment.

Nothing would happen to the Spirit of Bentheim and all of the valuable Larkinsons sheltering inside her hull with the reliable Shield of Samar in place!

Both the living mech and Venerable Jannzi were of one mind on this issue. No matter how many ranged mechs tried to damage the flagship of the Larkinson Clan, her powerful shielding abilities easily fended off the attacks without too much effort.

It was a pity that the Shield of Samar was still too slow to take part in the fight against the Shockshell. The recent upgrades to her design mostly enhanced the expert heavy space knight's defensive capabilities.

With many other expert mechs still entangled by other powerful opponents, the cost of helping out the Riot and the First Sword was still too great!

Right now, the battle between the Shockshell and its two opponents had become more thunderous than ever.

The Shockshell did not hold back in the slightest in its attempts to wear down the First Sword's defenses.

Venerable Rebecca Andus had adopted a clever strategy against her two opponents!

"Your First Sword is much less hardy than your Riot." She grinned as she continued to unleash a storm of attacks against the expert swordsman mech! "I would be a fool if I attacked your lumbering expert spearman mech first."

Though Venerable Rebecca had the strength to attack both expert mechs at the same time, why should she choose such an inefficient strategy when she could easily take down the thinner and less well-protected expert mech first?

She did not even have to look at the appearances of the two expert mechs to know which one she should target first. The Riot gave off the impression of a wild but stubborn boar, while the First Sword was like a sharp sword that was focused on cutting apart every obstacle.

"STOP PLAYING WITH ME, REBECCA!" Venerable Orfan furiously roared as she drove her Riot forward with even greater momentum than before!

Fueled by her anger and frustration, her need and desire to overcome the Shockshell was great.

However, just as her brightly glowing Riot was about to plunge its glowing spear against the Shockshell's resonance shield, the enemy expert mech simply slammed its glowing concussion shield in the charging Larkinson expert mech's direction.

"Repulsion Wave."

For the umpteenth time, the Shockshell easily negated the Riot's forward momentum and pushed it away!

This powerful move allowed the expert hybrid mech to continue directing all of its attacks onto the First Sword.

Even though Venerable Dise had abandoned her offensive approach and sought to preserve her expert mech by avoiding the Shockshell as much as possible, the enemy expert mech was too powerful!

The high-tier expert mech possessed an excellent flight system which easily allowed the larger and thicker mech to keep up with the movements of the First Sword.

In fact, it didn't even matter if the First Sword was able to build up a bit of distance. The Shockshell was already lethal enough by relying on its ranged armaments alone!

The Shockshell's armaments and configuration made it clear that it did not excel at long-range combat.

It had given up on more precise weapons in order to maximize its ability to crush enemy expert mechs at closer ranges!

This meant that the Shockshell was almost completely in its element at the moment. Venerable Rebecca not only seemed to be able to pull off her Repulsion Wave resonance ability without limit, she also imposed so much of her willpower onto Venerable Dise that the latter was beginning to feel more suppressed.

The disparity in resonance strength and willpower development was too great!

The First Sword might have helped to offset Venerable Rebecca's formidable influence to an extent, but it was up to the expert pilot to maintain a winning mentality.

As soon as Venerable Dise no longer believed that she could win this clash or endure the constant rain of attacks, her First Sword would no longer be able to withstand as much damage!

When Venerable Dise saw that the Riot got repulsed yet another time, she finally couldn't hold it any longer!

"Rosa! Stop blundering forward like an oafish boar! Use your brain for once! You can't beat a high-tier expert pilot by relying on brute force. You need to

condense your will into a weapon and cut through our opponent's Repulsion Wave!"

If Venerable Dise was in her colleague's position, then she would have been able to use a power move to cut the enemy's Repulsion Wave in half.

Unfortunately, she was in a different position. Her opponent clearly recognized that the First Sword possessed the sharpest weapon and needed to be neutralized as soon as possible!

"I can't hold it any longer!" Dise roared as her First Sword's resonance shield was already failing!

After getting bombarded by a combination of electrical and physical attacks, the First Sword finally became exposed after its resonance shield burst!

Venerable Dise became a lot more desperate at this moment!

Even though her expert mech was getting hit directly, she forcefully summoned her focus and will and struck with a giant energy sword!

It was a pity that the Shockshell's resonance shield was a lot firmer and unshakeable. Venerable Rebecca barely took the attack seriously!

Chapter 4280 Spontaneous Tricks

Venerable Orfan grew desperate and frustrated when she saw that the Shockshell had overcome the first layer of defense of the First Sword.

Though Venerable Dise's expert mech was not as fragile as other comparable expert swordsman mechs due to the protection afforded by its Unending alloy armor system, it was far from sufficient against an opponent as powerful as Venerable Rebecca!

The Shockshell itself possessed the capabilities to penetrate the First Sword's armor. As soon as it had overwhelmed the Larkinson mech's resonance shield, it had channeled extra power to its transphasic weapon systems in

order to amplify their damage potential and enhance their penetration characteristics.

The difference it made was clear!

Whenever the Shockshell fired its shoulder-mounted gauss cannons at the First Sword, the solid rounds punched deeper into the armor than before!

Though the limited power and caliber of the gauss cannons were ultimately not enough to ensure its firepower could punch through the First Sword's Unending alloy armor plating directly, just hitting the expert swordsman mech already caused its surface layers to crack.

What was even more dangerous was the shocking quality that Venerable Rebecca's powerful will imparted on the rounds, the First Sword also froze and became jerky for an instant.

Together with the electric bolts fired by the chest-mounted electrorods and the positron beams fired by the wrist-mounted energy cannons, the Shockshell was able to electrocute the First Sword to such a degree that the latter simply couldn't operate as smoothly as before.

This was a devastating debilitating effect to an expert pilot that relied on high control to operate her expert mech to the fullest!

"I love tearing apart fancy expert mechs like yours the most!" Venerable Rebecca laughed as her stormy willpower enhanced the shock quality of her expert mech's electrical attacks. "It doesn't matter how tough your armor is. It will be easy to dispose of you once I shock you into paralysis!"

The First Sword's armor might not possess any transphasic properties, but its sheer density and hardness still provided it with enough protection provided that the Shockshell did not concentrate its attacks on any weak points.

Although the Shockshell's offensive might was strong, it also happened to possess a single major shortcoming.

The expert hybrid mech lacked a sharp weapon that could penetrate through strong armor plating!

Though the Fridayman expert mech's transphasic shock hammer, transphasic concussion shield and transphasic shoulder-mounted gauss cannons were designed to inflict shock damage that could bypass the armor and directly damage the vulnerable internals of a mech, there were still limits to everything.

The Gauge Dynasty had not invested as much phasewater in the Shockshell as the Cross Clan had done for the Mars, and it showed as the First Sword stubbornly resisted the vibrations and electricity coursing through its exterior.

Though numerous internal components were beginning to get worn down, Venerable Dise tried her best to protect and preserve these vital parts by infusing them with as much true resonance as possible.

She had to give up on launching sharp and powerful attacks in order to do so, but the Swordmaiden expert pilot understood that she had no chance of defeating the Shockshell by herself.

Venerable Dise's only hope of overturning this battle was to buy enough time for Venerable Orfan or another friendly expert mech to come bail out her First Sword!

She couldn't do it alone!

As the Shockshell constantly bombarded the First Sword with electric attacks, it became increasingly harder for Dise to muster up the strength of her machine.

It was as if the Shockshell was slowly eating away at the First Sword's control mechanisms.

Even if the First Sword's armor remained intact, it risked freezing up if it continued to be bathed by electrical current.

Fortunately, she could still rely on a bit of help to mitigate the storm of attacks.

The First Sword itself had grown a lot since its initial creation. Even though it wasn't a masterwork expert mech, the mech still gained enough awareness to do everything it could to preserve its integrity.

What also helped was the Decapitator greatsword that was in the First Sword's hands!

As a masterwork mech weapon that Ketis had personally forged, the weapon had not only been infused with a piece of its creator, but also possessed a strong life of its own!

Since Venerable Dise constantly channeled it with her willpower, the Decapitator had grown even sharper and more unyielding than before.

Sword and wielder were one and the same!

The incredibly strong bond that Venerable Dise had forged with the Decapitator allowed the First Sword to achieve greater results with its weapon than before!

Right now, Venerable Dise was thinking hard on how to reduce the damage to her expert mech even further. Her only hope of doing so was to rely on the Decapitator, the vessel of her power.

Through the heavy pressure that the Shockshell exerted onto the First Sword, Dise's mind and will became so active that the Swordmaiden expert pilot finally came up with a crazy but daring idea!

Dise's eyes shone brightly as her resonance with the Decapitator had reached a peak!

"Cut through the storm!"

A blinding light escaped from the Decapitator as its wielder swung it down with great force!

The Shockshell responded quickly and already backed out of the range of the Decapitator, but the wide sword energy manifestation tore through the electrical current generated by the high-tier expert mech's electrorods and forcefully silenced the surrounding space!

For a few seconds, Venerable Dise's overwhelming need to dispel the storm and calm the space in front of her expert mech remained dominant.

However, Venerable Rebecca furiously pushed back and proceeded to launch electrical bolts and bursts at the First Sword!

The strength of their willpower was not comparable!

Venerable Dise might be able to buy a bit of time by bursting out with all of her strength, but her opponent could easily squash the resistance with just her regular focus!

"You are too young and weak to challenge an old soldier like me." Venerable Rebecca taunted even as her Shockshell continued to grind down the First Sword through a combination of melee and ranged attacks. "Challenging me was the most serious mistake you have ever made. Do you truly think that expert pilots such as myself who are closest to ace pilot can be challenged by the likes of you? You are at least half a century too young to earn my recognition!"

Although Venerable Dise had already made the wisest choice by shutting off the open communication channels to prevent her from hearing her opponent's words, it wasn't effective.

This was because Venerable Rebecca possessed so much strength and control over the surrounding space that she was easily able to convey her words to Venerable Dise by her force of will alone!

Venerable Rebecca Andus might sound confident, but she did not slack off in the slightest. A battle between expert pilots was also a battle of the mind. The more she was able to disturb her opponent's mental balance, the easier it would be to overwhelm the opposing expert mech in combat!

With Rebecca's resurging power, the brief outburst from Dise lost effect.

The latter did not give up, though. She spontaneously channeled her power in various different ways in order to create a defensive technique that could better cope against the storm that was zapping away at the First Sword.

Eventually, the First Sword held its Decapitator upright and turned it into a makeshift lightning rod!

Much of the electrical current that previously struck the First Sword's chest as well as other vulnerable parts now became attracted by the large and thick greatsword!

Though the Unending alloy sword endured greater stresses as a result, its transcendent, masterwork qualities helped a lot with reducing the influence of Venerable Rebecca's willpower.

This significantly reduced the amplification that made the electrical attacks so shocking and difficult to deal with. The remaining insulating and damage resisting properties could cope with the remaining electrical damage a lot easier as a result.

Venerable Dise felt a lot more relieved. Though her situation was still bad, she bought a bit more time for herself.

In a way, the Swordmaiden expert pilot felt thankful for Venerable Rebecca for teaching her the importance of developing more defensive techniques.

With her sword as the instrument of her will, Venerable Dise came up with one trick after another.

She spontaneously adapted her existing sword style and created a host of new extraordinary techniques that defended her expert mech against attacks in different ways!

In one moment, a shield of pure sword energy blocked the electrical storm.

In another moment, the Decapitators swept out and actually managed to cut the two solid projectiles that the Shockshell fired from its shoulder-mounted gauss cannons!

As Venerable Dise continued to dredge the less explored parts of her power in order to generate new defensive techniques, her opponent had long grown annoyed at the blatant experimentation.

Did this Larkinson expert pilot truly think that Venerable Rebecca was here to train her own opponent?!

"Don't get complacent!" Rebecca roared as the Shockshell charged forward and slammed its shock hammer against the First Sword!

The expert swordsman mech had to interrupt its lightning rod stance in order to block the hammer from striking its frame.

Even though the Decapitator successfully stopped the hammer from striking the Larkinson expert mech directly, the resulting electrical explosion engulfed the First Sword and fried some of its more exposed sensor modules!

However, it became increasingly harder for Venerable Rebecca to damage the deeper and more important components of the First Sword!

This was because the heavy pressure exerted onto Venerable Dise finally caused the proud and strong swordswoman to compromise on one of her beliefs.

As a Swordmaiden, Venerable Dise had always been taught to believe in her own strength.

A Swordmaiden must be strong because no one else could be counted upon for help.

At most, only other Swordmaidens could help a Swordmaiden, but it was best not to drag down fellow sisters due to lack of strength.

If one was weak, a Swordmaiden had no one to blame but herself.

Venerable Dise never imagined that she would be put in this position. For years, she had embraced the identity as an expert pilot and a hero of the Larkinson Clan. Her name was synonymous with the word strong and her melee dueling capabilities ranked among the top of her peers!

Being driven to this dire state by Venerable Rebecca Andus and her Shockshell was a considerable blow to her ego and her vanity.

As it became clear that her current measures were not sufficient to keep the First Sword going, Venerable Dise fell into a difficult dilemma.

Should she continue to believe in her own strength in the hopes that she could find a way to reverse the tide by herself, or should she take a step back from her own conviction and accept the need to rely on help?

At this crucial moment, Venerable Dise's will to survive and continue to protect her fellow Swordmaidens and Larkinsons exceeded her selfish desire to develop her own strength under the most difficult crucible possible!

It was as if Dise flipped a mental switch.

"Qilanxo! Assist me in battle!"

A silent roar rang through Venerable Dise's mind as she unabashedly embraced Qilanxo's influence.

The First Sword glowed brighter as it channeled the power of a design spirit!

Though Qilanxo was only able to effect the First Sword to a limited degree, the faint spatial barrier that hovered over the exterior of the expert swordsman mech substantially weakened the extraordinary properties of the incoming attacks, thereby allowing the Unending alloy armor plating to resist the blows with greater ease!

Venerable Dise could feel her mentality becoming more animalistic as her bond with Qilanxo grew stronger during this difficult period.

Her swordplay became more savage and less controlled, but the power of its strikes not only became stronger, but also dealt more damage against the Shockshell!

After a long period of laying low, Qilanxo finally gained an opportunity to display her might on the battlefield!