

# THE MECH TOUCH

## Chapter 7205: Waking Up Again

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"Ugh..."

Ves woke up in a daze.

His state of mind was quite weird at the moment.

On the one hand, he barely regained his consciousness. It was as if his mind was muffled by a thick blanket. His awareness was not quite online yet and he struggled to form any coherent thoughts.

On the other hand, Blinky and his other incarnations were in much better shape. They were not affected by the metaphorical blanket and maintained a relatively sober state of mind.

This duality confused his primary consciousness and caused him to experience reality at two different speeds.

"...P..."

He could feel himself groaning, but could not control his reaction. Though he did not know how much time had passed, he eventually managed to shrug off the thick blanket just enough to regain his awareness of the present.

"...Papa...?"

His bleary eyes gradually cleared up. He noticed that he was lying on a large bed in a pristine white medical facility.

He glanced at the surrounding deck and bulkhead and immediately recognized the surrounding architecture.

He could recognize the clear high-tech interior of the Tarrasque anywhere.

His concerns eased up. He had not fallen into the hands of unknown parties.

As Ves continued to regain his awareness, his body noticeably lagged behind compared to his mind.

"Papa...? Are you awake now?"

The delightful voice of one of his daughters peppered him up. He blinked a few times and finally registered one of the reasons why his body felt funny.

It was not only wrapped with bandages, but all three of his children cuddled against his side.

With Aurelia pressed on one side and her younger two siblings crowding on the other side, Ves immediately felt a burst of love from his chest as he observed his children.

"I... am awake..." He spoke with a hoarse throat. "Did... did we win...?"

His kids looked confused.

"Of course you did, papa." Andraste responded. "The Oscillating Fist would have killed you if you lost. I knew you would win, though! You never risk your life unless you were dead certain that you would survive somehow! Your fighting form was too awkward and sloppy though. The final phase lord got in way too many hits. He beat you up so bad that you needed to be put into a giant cultivation tank that healed your giant injuries for 4 days straight."

Ves tried his best to regain his memories of what happened at the time, but he only obtained bits and pieces.

Given the intensive treatment and his current state, he guessed that he still had many more days to go to return to full health.

Phase lords were troublesome in that aspect.

Their enormous bodies could withstand a lot of punishment, but it could easily take months if not years to recover from heavy and serious injuries!

There were many different treatment methods that could accelerate this process, but a phase lord ultimately had to rely on his natural regeneration to recover over time.

Ves felt incredibly worried at how long it took to regain his consciousness.

"How many days...?"

"5 days since the leadership challenge." Aurelia helpfully answered as she wrapped one of her slender arms around his belly. "Mother has grown increasingly more angry at you for sleeping for so long. She wanted to start the fabrication of the Riot Mark III, but she can't because your work is essential. There are also multiple high-ranking people asking for updates on

your condition. They urgently want to meet with you to discuss the rapid changes taking place."

Ves wearily smirked. He could imagine the panic and uncertainty that ensued after he fell into a coma right after he was supposed to take charge of the Phase Lord Department.

"I'll get up and handle my affairs one by one in an hour." He said before briefly pausing. "If my condition allows for it. How bad are my injuries?"

"You looked really bad after the fight." Little Marvaine said with concern as the youngest child clung to one of Ves' bandaged arms. "Lots of blood spilled from your mouth. The doctors said that you suffered a lot of damage to your internal organs."

Ves faintly nodded in understanding. "The Oscillating Fist is famous for that. He is a truly remarkable opponent for being able to master such an exquisite fighting technique. I believe this is one of the reasons why my head is still so fuzzy. I am under the influence of strong painkillers applied in such strong doses that they can actually affect the physique of a phase lord."

That was quite remarkable as phase lords became incredibly resistant to all manner of toxins and diseases. Ves was even more resistant than usual due to his unconventional biological transformations.

Though the painkillers prevented him from regaining his full mental acuity, he was not in a hurry to return to his full form.

He had fought so hard and suffered so much that he deserved a break. Spending quality time with his children sounded like a lovely way to enjoy his reprieve.

He continued to chat with his children. Once they confirmed that their father's condition was not about to deteriorate anytime soon, they eagerly babbled about anything that caught their interest.

"There is talk about the Red Collective organizing emergency council sessions to officially ratify your appointment as the department head of the Phase Lord Department." Aurelia said with notable interest. "Both the Lower Council and the Upper Council voted in favor of your change of positions with overwhelming majorities. You did not have many enemies, and they all understand that you are the only one who can rein in the Ascended Giants. They did have to strip you of your rank as chief councilor first, though.

According to the rules of the Red Collective, you are not allowed to occupy two top positions at once."

That did not come as a surprise to Ves. "That is the separation of powers at work. The Red Collective was deliberately set up to avoid any inappropriate concentrations of power. While the system is anything but perfect, it is better than the alternatives. The Upper Council is a legislative body. It writes the laws, but it cannot take advantage of them. That job is reserved for the department, which cannot decide upon the laws, but has the power to exercise the existing ones."

"Becoming a department head is still better than occupying a seat in the Upper Council, right?" His politically minded daughter asked.

"Yup." Ves smiled. "There is certainly power in becoming an Upper Councilor. You get to have a significant voice in the process of shaping the rules that govern a society. However, this is not the kind of power that interests me all that much. I can already shape human civilization with my mech designs and other innovations. That is my preferred way of enacting societal change. I would rather grasp a more concrete form of power, namely powerful troops under my command. This has been one of my persistent shortcomings. Now that I have taken over the Phase Lord Department, I have finally gained a complete foothold in the halls of power."



This was why he and the Dark Apostle worked so hard and risked so much to win the leadership challenge.

They wanted to make the transition from chess piece into a chess player!

Granted, Ves had already done so much that he had partially completed this transition.

If he followed a more normal development trajectory, then he would probably have to wait until he advanced to the rank of Master Mech Designer before he became qualified to join this circle.

That sounded way too slow for him. He felt increasingly more insecure in his own skin as threats kept popping up left and right. The emergence of the mutated voribugs drastically worsened his feeling of security.

He no longer felt as concerned as before. The Phase Lord Department was in his grasp. Even if the Red Collective was already inserting its own managers

and other personnel into the ranks of the previously insular organization, the Ascended Giants cared little about the opinions of the 'mortals'.

They only obeyed the strong among their kind. Ves more than earned their loyalty and submission given that he had won all 4 duels of the leadership challenge.

Plans already swirled in his mind. He was already thinking about which groups of giants he should station in Yernstall, which units he should dispatch to the frontlines and how many Ascended Giants should be left to join the Bluejay Fleet.

The former two groups should fulfill the Phase Lord Department's normal obligations to the Red Collective and the greater war effort. Ves had no intention of completely monopolizing all of the Ascended Giants.

That would only ensure that he would remain in control of the department for 20 years at most.

After that, the Red Collective would evaluate his leadership and determine that he had blatantly abused his position to serve his private interests!

This would definitely prompt the collies to replace him with another leader, one that they had probably trained to become the perfect leader for the giants!

Though Ves found it difficult to determine whether he still needed the power of the Ascended Giants two decades from now, he was not going to give up on them so easily!

He could easily see the Ascended Giants becoming a mainstay of red humanity.

That was not to say that mechs had become useless. Ves still remained committed to them. He was not about to change his primary profession anytime soon.

He just thought that it was better to have more variety at his disposal.

The Bluejay Fleet became increasingly messier as one group after another started to join or reinforce it. Ves did not reject any serious group of

reinforcements because their strength would always prove useful in one way or another.

There were certain missions that the Ascended Giants could fulfill a lot better than other solutions such as mechs and warships.

"You fought pretty badly, papa. The Swordmaidens are pretty embarrassed by your final performance." Andraste admonished her father. "I don't know what strange tech or mystery you used to shore up your fighting skills, but it is clear that you have very obvious gaps that even an amateur would fix in the first year of their training. You never seriously worked for it, so you need to make up for that with daily drills and sparring."

He already had an inkling of what she wanted. "Let me guess. Are you volunteering to be my sparring partner?"

"Yup!"

"You're a little too... small for that, my dear. I have no interest in training my fighting skills. I leave that to my... other self. The Dark Apostle is much bigger than me. He should also be a lot more interested in sparring against his fellow

Ascended Giants. It is best if you keep your distance from me when I am in my phase lord mode."

He elaborated on his warning and firmly insisted that his children should try their best to avoid the Dark Apostle.

While he was not too concerned that his other personality would lay a hand on the kids, who knew what kind of vile lies he would spew in their presence.

Ves knew everything that went on in the Dark Apostle's mind, and he was sure the same applied in reverse.

Though the two had formed an implicit and unspoken accord to never divulge any secrets that belonged to the other personality, who knew whether the Dark Apostle would abide by this rule.

The thing about unwritten rules was that there was no proper means to enforce them! Anyone could break them if they thought that no one would sanction them for their deeds!

The best way to prevent accidents was to erase the conditions that made them possible.

So long as his children and the Dark Apostle earnestly tried to avoid each other, then that was enough to ease his worries.