

THE MECH TOUCH

Chapter 7207: Emergency Decisions

The Red Collective's legal interpretation of Ves' identity was incredibly significant.

It essentially codified red humanity's official stance towards the existence of multiple personalities in the same body.

No matter whether the other personality was a companion spirit or a ghost who invaded a cultivator's body, so long as they had become intrinsically inseparable from the soul or other personalities, they should be treated as a single legal identity.

This was not the right way to treat every case of multiple personalities. However, Ves had spent enough time on reviewing some of the bills that circulated through the Lower and Upper Council to know that the right solutions often had to make way for more expedient solutions.

Treating Ves, Blinky and the Dark Apostle as a single 'human individual' was easy to work with. Others did not have to keep careful track of which personality they addressed and wonder if a contract with one applied to the other two as well.

However, there were many potential dangers to this ruling. The Dark Apostle could potentially screw Ves over by negotiating a highly unfavorable deal in the latter's name.

Since they were supposed to be the same 'person', a contract signed by one of them was also valid on the other one!

The only reason why Ves was not too worried about this risk was because he already negotiated a tentative deal with his other personality.

Ves could do a lot of damage to the Dark Apostle's interests, especially if his split personalities was not yet common knowledge among others.

He had a strong feeling that the Red Collective mainly sought to create a precedent. They wanted to present a good solution for his case that would also solve issues related to other people that would suffer similar afflictions in the future.

In the RC's haste to develop an answer, Ves had little choice but to offer himself up as a sacrifice.

The collies would continue to monitor him and evaluate whether they set the rules correctly.

Ves could only shrug at this behavior. The best he could hope for was that the collies would maintain a consistent stance and avoid changing the rules a few years later.

While he did not entirely agree with the rules set by the RC, he could still live with them. He would just have to encourage the Dark Apostle to keep playing by the rules.

"Do you require any further clarification, sir?" Eliza Mo Ragadan asked after she gave him a short legal briefing.

Ves waved his hand. "Not for the time being. I think I get it. I can figure out the rest by myself for the most part. Let us move on to more important stuff first. What urgent decisions do I need to make?"

The Divine Harpoon spoke up for the first time at this point.

"You, or the Dark Apostle, must choose or confirm the Ascended Giants that lead your three phalanxes." The human phase lord said. "There is considerable confusion about who is permitted to lead the Ur-Titan Phalanx and whether the Fiery Axe and I are allowed to retain our current ranks in your administration."

Ah, yes. This was a critical matter that certainly needed to be addressed.

There was only one problem, though.

"This... isn't a decision that I should make." Ves reluctantly said. "I certainly have my opinions about this matter, but... I have made a deal with my other personality. We may comprise a single legal identity, but our opinions diverge by quite a lot. I have made an agreement that I would defer most decisions related to managing the Phase Lord Department to the Dark Apostle. For now, this means that I am only willing to make emergency decisions that can maintain the current status quo and prevent the situation from deteriorating any further."

The Divine Harpoon looked thoughtful at that. "Please give the appropriate orders, then."

"I do not mind keeping you and the Fiery Axe as the strategoi of the Faceless Giants and the Flesh Choppers respectively. I would like for the two of you to write reports that explain the justifications of your decisions up to this moment and what the two of you intend to do in the future. I also need you two to draft a list of candidates who may be suited to take over your seats if the Dark Apostle has decided to replace you. Eliza, you should help out in this matter."

His chief of staff frowned but nodded.

An outside perspective would be needed to write the reports that he desired. Eliza knew very little about the Phase Lord Department's internal affairs, so she would have to work hard to understand the circumstances of every individual phalanx.

"Will the Ur-Titans be able to hold without a strategos?" Ves asked.

"I am not too certain." The Divine Harpoon honestly admitted. "At this moment, the Ur-Titans have yet to turn into headless chickens because the Unshakeable King's deputy has stepped up to keep them in line. The Grapple King still lacks official sanction. I recommend that you at least give him an interim appointment so that he can be taken more seriously for the time being. The Ur-Titans... have great egos. The longer they are left unchecked, the more they may decide to take matters into their own hands. They need a firm hand to remain obedient."

Hearing that caused Ves to frown. "I do not like the sound of that. Is this because the Ur-Titans are the best of the best?"

The Divine Harpoon ruefully smiled. "You hit the nail on the head, sir. The Ur-Titans are the first human phase lords and have received the most individual investment. They regularly lord it over in front of my Faceless Giants, who are admittedly unable to defeat them in single duels. However, I am confident that our entire phalanx can still defeat theirs due to our advantage in numbers as well as consistency in training and tactics."

The Ur-Titans and the Faceless Giants couldn't be any more different.

While the former possessed a number of consistent traits, the Ur-Titans received heavy encouragement to develop individual traits that could make them more excellent.

The Faceless Giants on the other hand were largely encouraged to stick to the same formula. Consistency was one of their greatest strengths. Only their leaders and sub-leaders were allowed to develop a few more individual traits in order to serve as champions.

"I think I have read an intelligence briefing about the Grapple King, but I want an insider's perspective on the man. Can you confirm that he is not a radical, Divine Harpoon?"

The only other human phase lord in the room nodded without hesitation.

"I can assure you that the Grapple King is a suitable interim leader, sir. He will hold down the fort for you without enacting any significant changes without your input. The Unshakeable King has voiced strong opinions on how we should embrace our inherent godhoods and subjugate the humans under our exclusive rule. The Grapple King has not openly rejected these calls, but from what I have heard from him on numerous occasions, he is not as radical as his strategos at the time. He is content with making us independent."

Ves nodded. "Then he can remain in charge for the time being. The Dark Apostle may eventually decide to put a different giant in his office, so keep that in mind. By the way, from what I understand, many Ascended Giants are in favor of separating from the human race and forming their own one. How... popular is this stance?"

"Very." The Divine Harpoon said with a serious expression. "This is the prevailing consensus among our kind. I can... understand why you and the rest of the RC may not be in favor of this stance, but it is a matter of principle for us. If you force us to identify as red humans, you will face intense opposition. Defections will become inevitable as this matter has become a red line for over half us of if not more. I am sorry, but we have diverged too much from our birth race. We have become unrecognizable monsters to most humans. We... do not want to go back."

Ves had a feeling that there was a lot more to this matter than simple brainwashing from the Red Ocean, but he was not the Dark Apostle. He simply could not sympathize with their crazy opinions.

He turned to Secret Keeper Zariel-775. "What does the rest of the RC think about this matter?"

"We would prefer a return to the old status quo, but if that is not possible... we can reluctantly live with a future where the Ascended Giants have their way. We only hope that you can keep them in service to red humanity rather than the native aliens."

"That should not be a problem." The Divine Harpoon said in a confident tone. "We may have lost our desire to call ourselves human, but we cannot erase our past and family ties. Many of us are willing to fight to protect our former civilization, but only if we are respected as allies rather than vassals or slaves. It is important that red humanity affords us due respect as a 'foreign' power."

"The Red Collective and other human institutions will try their best to oblige." Zariel-775 vaguely said. "The premise is that we can count on your service."

Ves did not object to this arrangement. He believed the Dark Apostle would be supportive of this as well. This was a nice middle ground that stopped the Phase Lord Department from backsliding any further.

"What other important matters do I need to address?" Ves asked as he gradually felt increasingly more energetic.

He was continuing to recover from his previous condition. His mind slowly started to regain more clarity as the painkillers ran their course.

An awkward silence ensued.

"We planned for you to make a series of emergency decisions such as approvals of personnel transfers and such." His chief of staff eventually said. "We will need you to bring out the Dark Apostle in order to proceed."

She was right. Ves could not contradict his earlier words.

"Give me a bit more time, then." He reluctantly said. "I think I need more time to regain my clarity and handle other matters that fall under my purview. How about this? Let us reconvene in the evening. I will do my best to unfold my true body and let the Dark Apostle out at that time. I am not sure if my injured state will allow me to do this, but we will find out later."

That sounded like an acceptable plan to them all. The Phase Lord Department had remained in suspense for 5 days straight. The Ascended Giants could afford to wait a little longer before their new leader finally showed up and took charge in person.

"We shall do our best to keep our boys and girls in line." The Divine Harpoon promised. "I should go back to them in order to convey your interim decisions."

Ves waved his hand at the Ascended Giant. "Then go with my blessing. Wait. Before you leave, I want to ask one question."

"Please ask away, sir."

"Back during the end of our duel... when I blasted you with my second sacrificial spear... did you deliberately admit defeat, or were you truly unable to toss your third harpoon at that point?"

Compared to Ves, the Divine Harpoon was in much better physical condition! The latter didn't even look hurt on the surface!

The strategos of the Faceless Giant responded with an ambiguous smile. "You have already passed the leadership challenge with flying colors. You have more important things to do than look back at your duels. As far as I am concerned, you have proven your strength and your qualifications to lead the Ascended Giants. Your victory over me is entirely deserved, and I will argue against anyone who may question its validity."

Ves believed that was all he could get from the Divine Harpoon.