

Mech 2597

Chapter 2597 Imaginary Weight

After inspecting the first batch of Transcendent Punishers and their overly-fanatical mech pilots, Ves became somewhat reassured of the performance of the new mechs.

Despite the quirks and shortcomings of his first true heavy mech design, the Transcendent Punisher was a killer at range. Ves was especially satisfied with the great potential of its Xcordon cannons.

He could have licensed more accurate heavy gauss cannon models that boasted significantly greater muzzle velocity, but he disliked their lack of punch.

He much preferred to make use of heavier calibers that were capable of firing heavier rounds with an abundant amount of energy. While these rounds traveled at slower speeds as soon as they emerged from the barrel, their impact and armor piercing properties were much greater!

This was exactly what Ves needed in order to deal with powerful enemies. He did not fear swarms of weaker mechs as the Transcendent Punisher along with many of his other mechs could easily defeat a disorganized mob.

What Ves truly worried about was fighting against some of the stronger second-class pioneers in the Red Ocean. His fleet needed to project as much deterrence as possible to prevent opportunistic attacks, and the heavy cannons of the Transcendent Punishers should be able to do a good job at scaring away potential attackers!

Besides, the design spirit took care of the inherent accuracy problem at longer ranges. While there was definitely a price to this powerful ability, it could easily change the course of the battle when used correctly.

As Ves finally dismissed the Ylvainan mech pilots, he and James remained behind. They both approached the Prophet's Fist, the first production copy of the Transcendent Punisher. Its excellent quality along with the fact that Ves and his wife had personally put it together caused it to exude a greater presence than the other mechs of its kind.

"I must say you have chosen quite a violent name for this mech." James spoke with his smooth and calming voice. "Prophets generally aren't associated with using their fists to propagate their visions."

"Says the mech pilot who stole the prototype of my Transcendent Messenger and paraded it on Kesseling VIII."

"Mechs are more than weapons of wars. They can also serve as symbols of hope and sources of inspiration. You excel at making them, in fact. Even if war is ever extinguished throughout reality, you can be assured that your creations will still remain relevant."

Ves snorted. "What you speak of is an impossibility. War is eternal. War is an intrinsic part of life. So long as multiple people or aliens exist, there will always be conflict."

"Who knows." The Living Prophet smiled. "In any case, these fine machines should be more than up to the task of keeping our followers invigorated. The power and majesty exuded by these mechs are simply the best symbols of piety."

"They're your followers, not mine."

"That is not what they think."

"Just because they think I'm the Bright Martyr doesn't mean I buy into your crap!" Ves pushed back! "I designed this mech to defend our fleet, not your stupid cult. The Spirit of Bentheim and many of our other starships will soon rely on this mech model to be their point defense. I hope the mech pilots among your followers will pilot my artillery mechs without causing trouble. Can you make sure your men behave?"

"Their obedience is never in question. My followers will always be faithful to you and your commands."

"Whatever. As long as your believers make good use of the Transcendent Punishers, I might design a melee Ylvainan mech in the future."

"You will definitely do so." James confidently stated. "It shall be a work of glory that will revitalize faith and convert new believers!"

Ves glowered at the prophet. "If you keep talking like that, I feel much less inclined to design another Ylvainan mech."

"It will be a second-class lancer mech. Once complete, the mech burns with the fire of our faith as it impales its spear through the bodies of the fallen and the wicked. Piloting this great mech will be an honor to any believer."

"SHUT UP!" Ves blew up! "Don't think I don't know what you're doing! You're implanting suggestions in my mind so that I will subconsciously grow accustomed to your suggestion to the point where I will actually design it! This is nothing more than a manipulative psychological trip to turn your remark into a self-fulfilling prophecy!"

"Believe what you will, but the design choices you make in the future are impeccable. Your lancer mech design will be a work of that will become a legend!"

The prophet spoke so much nonsense that Ves tired of this discussion. He automatically disregarded what James said and turned to leave.

"I have work to do. The Spirit of Bentheim is slowly ramping up production of our Transcendent Punishers. Even though the efficiency of our production halls aren't high, as long as our mech technicians aren't incompetent, we should be able to fill up all of the bunkers of our flagship."

The learning curve of the GAIA production line and all of its complicated tools and equipment was very formidable. When utilized to its fullest, the formidable production line could probably put together a Transcendent Punisher in 2 days!

This was incredibly fast!

A normal second-class production line needed at least 5 to 8 days to complete so much work. A heavy mech possessed a lot more components, so more time was needed to fabricate them and assemble them. The Transcendent Punisher design was also very complex as it incorporated at least three different weapon systems and a very comprehensive internal architecture.

If not for obtaining twenty top-of-the-line GAIA 3D printers and other high-quality mass production-oriented equipment, Ves wouldn't have been able to obtain the initial batch of Transcendent Punishers within a week!

To be honest, Ves wasn't sure whether the Spirit of Bentheim would be able to occupy all of her bunkers upon departure. If the learning curve was steeper than what his production crews could handle, then they might have to work while his fleet transitioned into FTL.

As Ves considered whether he should pay a visit to the production halls in order to instruct the mech technicians in person, James called out a warning.

"One more thing, Bright Martyr. You may want to sharpen your defenses. I sense turbulence on the horizon. Old hatreds are coming together to finish their grudges once and for all. Your heart will be burdened by regret if you leave without settling your bonds of karma."

Ves stopped his tracks and turned around. His eyes bore into James' well-meaning gaze.

"I have three points to say to you." He raised a finger. "First, so many people hate me that I am always under threat. Telling me there's danger on the

horizon is as useless as saying that stars are hot and that entering a black hole is a one-way trip."

He raised another finger. "Second, who says that grudges have to be resolved? I have formed plenty of grudges and have made a lot of enemies. I've outgrown most of them. This star sector is too small to make me care about the issues that bothered me in the past. People like Carlos and Patricia have become so insignificant that I don't really hate them anymore. They're sad, pathetic space peasants who will never amount to anything in their lives."

Ves raised another finger. "Third, I don't have much of a heart anymore. It's largely been subsumed by my Jutland organ. I never regret anything as I consider every mistake to be a valuable lesson. Also, that karma doesn't exist except in the delusions of certain religions. I don't care at all if a mountain of karma is weighing down on my shoulders. My daily workload is a much more telling burden."

With that, he strode away while shoving everything James had said aside. Rather than worrying about vague and unsubstantiated predictions, Ves would much rather think about progressing his mech design projects.

He ascended up the decks and moved all the way back to the design lab.

Once there, Ves loosened up as he had returned to his home ground. The sanctity of the design lab was far more comforting to him than any temple.

He threw a brief glance at Maikel. Ever since the kid found his passion, he acted like a man possessed.

With his high Intelligence score and even higher Concentration score, Maikel quickly absorbed the basics of mech programming and moved on to more advanced textbooks!

"Keep up the good work."

After glimpsing at the work of some of his design teams, he reached the area reserved by the lead designers and returned to his wife.

"Miaow!"

Clixie looked up from the desk as she smelled his arrival. The cat squinted in pleasure as Ves ran his hand over her soft and lovely fur.

"That's my cat, Ves." Gloriana swiveled her chair around. "Where is Lucky?"

"He's on shift. By the way, now that we're married, Clixie ought to be mine as well now, right?"

"No!"

"Miaow!"

Gloriana quickly grasped her furry pet and held her protectively against her chest. She planted a kiss on Clixie's forehead. "She's my baby!"

They chatted a bit before they moved on to the state of a couple of their projects.

"The Bright Warrior IB design is going along well." Gloriana called up a projection of the current iteration of the design. "Since you are prioritizing it so much, we have spent the most time on it. Many of the design choices and solutions we've applied to the original, the IC, are still valid when translated to a second-class frame. It's just that we can't copy our work straight away without making targeted adjustments."

"Have you tried our new ship AI yet? Our new ASTERA AI core is already proving to be incredibly helpful. I can simulate thousands of different solutions in a matter of seconds and pick out the best ones. We don't have to waste so much time on theorizing and performing manual calculations. We can just employ a brute force process that will automatically allow us to pick the most optimal solution while we do something else."

Gloriana frowned. "That's a lazy approach, Ves, and you know it. Without understanding the theory and the steps we have to take to solve a problem, how can we ever understand our mech designs? If we want to fabricate a masterwork mech, we need to be as familiar with our mech designs as possible. We can't take shortcuts."

"I don't necessarily disagree with you, but Bygul is a very helpful resource. We shouldn't waste its formidable processing power."

The two still differed in opinion regarding this. While Ves wanted his designs to be as good as possible, he didn't see any conflict. As long as they didn't go overboard with relying on their AI core, they could still end up with a good product that was fully in their grasp.

"If we utilize Bygul more often, we might be able to accelerate the completion of this project." Ves predicted. "Once we reach the optimizing and bug-fixing phase, much of the work is processor-intensive."

"We'll see."

The other mech that he wanted to talk about was a project that Gloriana and Ves were quite interested in. The design project codenamed Devious was a

Hexer stealth mech intended to facilitate sabotage, infiltration and assassination.

This was the first time that Ves designed a true stealth mech. The Hexer stealth tech that he had access to and the knowledge on stealth technology that he had obtained had significantly raised his proficiency in this field!

Gloriana frowned and petted her cat. "The Devious is shaping up to be a fine mech, but I haven't heard anything about its proto-god so far. Have you made any progress?"

"I have a plan in mind. I intend to create a new design spirit, but in order to do so, I have to gather the right ingredients. That is proving much more troublesome than I thought."