

Mech 3901

Chapter 3901 Cerebral Thoughts

Ves and many other humans thought that the battle had already ended when the Phase King ceased any form of resistance.

Though the Phase Kingdom still possessed a decent amount of strength, the fish-whales over there were not as strong and coordinated as their elites. They also expended a lot of strength to resist the Swarmers and needed time to restore their combat effectiveness.

By the time these Phasers arrived to save their king fish, Task Force Fisherman should have already left the battlefield!

Ves had already moved on from worrying about this battle to handling the aftermath. How could he ensure that his clan would be able to retain the maximum possible amount of phasewater? How could he persuade the MTA to get its grubby hands off his plunder?

He was already beginning to consider different arguments that could persuade the mechers to make a few exceptions for him and his clan and allow him to retain his rich bounty.

"If the MTA really insists on confiscating most of my phasewater, then I should at least push for a lot of concessions."

As Ves kept daydreaming about the rich rewards that he could obtain from this successful campaign, the Cerebral King suddenly interrupted all of his considerations!

It turned out that the powerful king fish gorged upon the body of the Phase King in order to trigger its final evolutionary step!

So many years had passed since the Cerebral King had slowly evolved and augmented its body into a powerful state.

It was only now that it had finally made up for all of the shortcomings that had prevented it from completing its master plan.

With the energy derived from the starship-grade power reactor and the abundant amount of phasewater stolen from the Lake Continent, the Cerebral King had cleared away almost all of the obstacles that prevented it from realizing its ambitions!

After supplementing its body by digesting the rich flesh from the Phase King, the Cerebral King did not delay any further and straightforwardly moved on to enacting its ultimate goal!

The Cerebral King's body rippled as its flesh began to get more excited than ever! All of its cells were eagerly absorbing as much energy and phasewater as they could as they morphed into a higher state that apparently possessed much more amazing properties than the cells of ordinary fish-whales!

Even though the Cerebral King was in the process of changing its very essence, it still managed to retain enough awareness and self-control to channel its vastly-expanded phasewater abilities into a feat previously considered impossible by the fish-whale race.

Up until now, Purgatory functioned as both a paradise and a prison. More than a million years had passed without any apparent sign that the pocket space opened up a connection to the outside cosmos.

Few fish-whales ever thought about this because their knowledge was limited to begin with. Only a few ancient individuals were aware of the fact that the phase whale enclave was just a tiny slice of space that had been separated from a much larger reality.

All of the king fishes happened to know this secret!

From the moment that the Cerebral King learned that there was not just an entire galaxy outside of Purgatory but that it was also the home to the race that produced its god, the king fish yearned to reach this wonderful space.

Of course, that was not its only goal.

Having survived all the way up until now, the Cerebral King diligently worked on continuing and perfecting the work of its god and creator.

Still, the Cerebral King originally did not have much confidence that it could attain its goal at first. The other fish-whale subspecies were much stronger than its own. It seemed impossible for the Evolution Kingdom to defeat both the Phase Kingdom and the Hot Kingdom.

It was only when the unwitting outsiders had come and proposed several agreements that the ambitious king fish saw a way to succeed!

These greedy humans thought that they could use the strength of the Cerebral King and its subjects to break open the Lake Kingdom.

What these short-sighted aliens with their metal 'mechs' failed to realize was that the Cerebral King took advantage of their gifts and means to fulfill its ultimate goal!

So what if the Evolvers all suffered heavy casualties when fighting against the elite Phaser fish-whales?

Although the Evolvers all considered the Cerebral King to be their father, the king fish never really cared about its subjects in the first place!

They were all disposable experimental material in its eyes! The Evolver fish-whales served no other purpose than to test-drive its latest organ designs and serve as cannon fodder whenever the other fish-whale kingdoms launched an attack on Cerebral King's territory!

Now that the Cerebral King was on the cusp of completing its greatest ambition, it had no use for its test subjects anymore! The king fish resolutely abandoned the remaining the Evolvers and never threw them a second look.

After all, why should the Cerebral King care about their feelings when he was about to advance its own interests?

MY ASCENSION BEGINS NOW!

Shortly after the transforming Cerebral King used its expanded phasewater abilities to punch a hole through the barrier that isolated Purgatory from other spaces, it immediately entered an immense tomb where the bones that it was finally able to come in touch with the bones it had always dreamt about!

The Cerebral King's massive eyes grew tender and misty as the squirming king fish lowered its body and rubbed its belly on one of the massive rib bones of the gigantic skeleton.

A shudder ran through the massive fish-whale's body.

GOD... WE MEET AGAIN...

While the Cerebral King cast its mind back to the past while rubbing its morphing body against the powerful bones of the deceased phase whale, the humans and Evolvers watching what was going on through the fractured hole in space were completely frozen due to shock!

The Evolver fish-whales couldn't make sense of all of the changes. This was way too far beyond their experiences that their alien brains essentially became stuck.

The humans were a little better. Many of them were veterans of multiple battles and other crises. In addition to that, their perspectives were much broader. They were all aware that many wondrous and powerful means existed in the cosmos.

Still, now that they came face-to-face in one such event, few mech pilots were able to maintain their composure in front of all of these rapid changes.

The entire battlefield became turbulent as the fabric of space suffered from the damage inflicted by the Cerebral King!

While the hole in space was slowly healing, the disruption caused by this phenomenon produced spatial shocks that inflicted similar damage to the spatial attacks launched by the Phaser fish-whales!

"RETREAT! GET OUT OF THERE! DON'T STAY CLOSE!"

Many mech pilots and Evolver fish-whales quickly woke up and distanced themselves from the hole.

While Commander Casella, Patriarch Reginald and several other mech officers hastily organized the disarrayed surviving mech units, the Everchanger had yet to move.

Although the mech became exposed to the spatial turbulence produced by the fractured hole in space, Venerable Joshua had already switched the Everchanger's design spirit to Qilanxo.

Once he resonated with both his expert mech and its current design spirit, an augmented resonance shield surrounded the Everchanger that fully shielded it against the spatial ripples, at least for the time being.

This was not a permanent solution, though.

"Sir! We need to go! We can't endure this pressure for too long!"

During the previous battle, Venerable Joshua and the Everchanger managed to conserve their resources, so they still had a lot of fight left. They did this in case they needed to respond against unexpected developments on the battlefield.

To Ves, the current incident definitely qualified as an 'unexpected development'!

The problem was that the scope and magnitude of this drastic turn of events exceeded his wildest expectations!

How could the Everchanger ever confront the Cerebral King when the latter had grown so powerful!?

Although Ves wasn't sure what the Cerebral King aimed to do by forcefully entering the Royal Tomb, he was sure that it was not good for him and humanity as a whole if this ancient fish-whale gained access to the giant phase whale skeleton!

"Damnit, did we get used by the Cerebral King?!"

Ves felt incredibly sour at the realization that the supposed ignorant indigenous alien beast was not as naive and stupid as he thought.

By now, it became abundantly clear that the Cerebral King had led Ves and the other humans by the nose!

"There's no point blaming myself." He depreciating muttered.

Besides, the deal they struck was meant to be a win-win arrangement. Both sides agreed to cooperate together in order to fulfill their own goals.

The Cerebral King managed to complete its evolution and somehow gained access to the Royal Tomb.

The expeditionary forces not only got a bunch of research data and valuable Evolver fish-whale organs, but also managed to plunder over 2 metric tons of phasewater as well as dozens of salvaged Phaser fish-whale organs!

Aside from that, they also gained a massive bonus by obtaining 22 new expert candidates and 5 new expert pilots!

In this regard, the Larkinson Clan and its allies did not suffer any major losses!

Sure, the previous battle against the Phasers resulted in the deaths of hundreds of mech pilots, but this did not affect the strength of the Golden Skull Alliance.

Mech pilots were easy to recruit!

While the good ones were hard to obtain, the Larkinson Clan and other organizations just had to invest a few years into getting the new recruits up to standard.

In any case, Ves had no reason to feel he had led his men astray by choosing to ally with the Cerebral King!

"It's clear that our cooperation has ended, though."

The Cerebral King did not even bother to give an explanation to its human allies before running off to the Royal Tomb.

Whatever it was planning to do next clearly didn't require the intervention of others!

Ves grew a bit conflicted now that events had spiraled into this fashion.

"Your orders, sir?!" Venerable Joshua urgently pressed as he tried his best to keep the Everchanger stable while it was hovering so close to the space hole. "I can only keep

this up for one minute before we start incurring damage. Please make up your mind, sir!"

Despite the expert pilot's nagging, Ves forcefully tried to calm himself down so that he did not make any rash or impulsive decisions.

If he had to make a snap decision, then he would probably order Joshua to take the Everchanger into the Royal Tomb and stop whatever dastardly plan the Cerebral King had been plotting all of this time.

"That sounds incredibly stupid."

There were three reasons why he thought this way.

First, the Cerebral King was too strong! Its recent victory not only restored it from its exhausted state, but also pushed its overall might to the next level.

To be able to punch through the barrier of space that isolated Purgatory for so long required a huge amount of phasewater, energy and ability!

If the Phase King was able to accomplish this feat by itself, it would have done so a long time ago!

Second, the Royal Tomb did not have any obvious entrances or exits. If the Everchanger rashly barged inside, how would Ves and Joshua possibly be able to leave if the space hole disappeared?

There was no guarantee that the MTA would be able to bail out the stranded Everchanger and its occupants!

Third, what did the Cerebral King's plans have to do with Ves? The king fish might not be the friend and ally that he desired, but it was not an outright enemy to him either.

The two had just been using each other without any hard feelings. There was no reason to think that the Cerebral King developed a grudge against Ves and his clan, so what did it matter that the evolving fish-whale was about to enact a plan that was in the making for more than a million years?

"This is someone else's problem!" Ves righteously concluded. "If the mechers are so eager to get their hands on Purgatory, then let them clean up this mess! Joshua, let's get out of here! Our task force must return to the Gate Continent right away! It's time to say goodbye to Purgatory!"

Venerable Joshua sighed in relief. "Finally!"

Chapter 3902 A Devil's Bargain

Once Ves made his decision, the Everchanger decisively moved away from the unstable hole in the fabric of space!

The journey was not easy. The destabilization of space produced so much turbulence that any unprotected mechs would have malfunctioned at this point!

Ves only had to look at the nearby mechs and fish-whale bodies to observe the devastating effects.

Half of them somehow got sucked into the space hole. The other half became crushed or torn apart from the stresses of warped and deformed space.

Much to his distress, the gigantic, half-eaten body of the entity known as the Phase King suffered the latter fate!

The cruelest part about this was that the Phase King was still alive!

Despite the heavy injuries and despite the Cerebral King biting off large amounts of flesh and organs from its body, the Phase King still managed to cling to life in its own way!

It was rather amazing to see how resilient a top fish-whale could be. The Phase King even managed to put up a bit of resistance against the spatial tearing effects due to its own mastery of spatial manipulation along with the inherent resistance imparted by its phasewater-saturated flesh!

Still, the injured and dying Phase King could only do so much. The Cerebral King had specifically eaten its most powerful and developed phasewater organs. The wounded king fish had precious little resources left to do anything else but prolong its inevitable death.

The Phase King only resisted because it was in its nature to do so. The proud and ancient king fish did not survive for this long if it was willing to accept defeat so easily!

It especially did not want to give the Cerebral King the satisfaction of causing its own death!

As the Everchanger kept flying away, Ves looked at the precious Phaser fish-whale bodies flying into the Royal Tomb or getting torn apart with regret.

If Task Force Fisherman had an hour or so to clean up the battlefield, he was sure that his mechs and shuttles would be able to return to the expeditionary fleet with a larger bounty of precious Phaser fish-whale organs!

It didn't matter if the shuttles ran out of cargo space. The mechs could just use their limbs to grab onto the surplus organs. Since much of the space inside Purgatory consisted of empty vacuum, the organs shouldn't rot and decay so quickly.

Even if the organs ultimately died, they could still perform a lot of destructive research on the organic material.

After that, they could easily extract all of the phasewater infused into the flesh, thereby obtaining a lot of additional kilograms of phasewater!

To see all of that potential wealth being wasted at such a close distance caused Ves to feel incredibly frustrated!

When the projected view focused on the dying body of the Phase King, Ves suddenly jerked.

"Wait a second! Joshua!"

"Yes, patriarch?"

"Turn around and head over to the Phase King's body! Try and grab hold of it to see if you can drag it out of the danger zone. It's too precious for us to abandon!"

"Are you kidding, sir?! Look at the size of its body! It's too big and massive! There's no way my mech can drag it out by itself!"

Ves sobered up a little after that. He had become so frustrated at losing out on so many gains that his emotions got the better of his rationality.

Joshua was right. The Phase King's body was still as large as a sub-capital ship despite all of the injuries it had suffered.

It would take far too much time and effort for a single mech or even several mechs to drag out of the region of turbulent space!

That didn't mean that Ves wanted to give up on it, though. His eyes turned narrow and ruthless as he quickly considered alternative ideas.

"Do as I say and reach the Phase King's side! If we can retrieve its whole body, then we should at least be able to salvage an organ or something! C'mon, Joshua! It's just a short trip!"

"The Everchanger..."

"Trust in my work! I know exactly how much abuse it can take! This little space turbulence won't tear it apart too much. If the damage isn't too big, you can easily repair it by resonating with the Fixer Iron integrated in the Everchanger."

The Everchanger came with a resonating ability that allowed it to regenerate moderate damage!

Even though there were many limitations to this ability, it was still an amazing feature that massively boosted the expert hero mech's survivability.

If enemies didn't learn about this function beforehand, they would be in for a nasty surprise when the Everchanger refreshed its damaged frame!

That was something to consider for the future. Right now, Ves just wanted to make sure that he could retrieve at least one final gain from this place!

While the Everchanger moved closer, Ves accessed all of the sensor readings and visual feeds. He needed to understand the condition of the body as much as possible in order to determine where he could obtain the most profit.

"The damn Cerebral King already made off with all of the good stuff!"

The fish-whales all seemed to possess the innate ability to determine the best parts to cannibalize from each other's bodies. The Cerebral King was even better at it since it had studied fish-whale physiology intensively for so many years!

Although Ves could still observe that the Phase King's body still retained many tons of flesh, they were basically ordinary flesh and muscle mass that had no significant value.

"What a poor creature."

The Phase King that was still clinging to life rolled its intact eyes at the metal machine that was hovering a short distance away.

The ultimate loser of the battle experienced a lot of mixed feelings and emotions during its final moments.

Ves was sensitive to these fluctuations. He quickly turned his attention away from the Phase King's ravaged body and focused on the king fish's relatively powerful spirit.

Although the Phase King was not as strong as the Cerebral King in this aspect, the creature did not get to live this long if its spirituality was weak!

In fact, one of the theories that Ves always held about life was that any organism's spirituality would eventually grow to a formidable height if they lived long enough.

When the expeditionary fleet first encountered the Titania, Ves became incredibly impressed by the astral beast's age and wisdom.

He would have thought that the Phase King's spirituality far surpassed that of the Titania, but the reality was quite different!

"It's not as strong or rich..."

The Titania possessed a wealth of knowledge and memories that enriched her life. Even if the current incarnation of the design spirit lost enormous portions of her original self, what was left could still dwarf the limited and monotonous thoughts of the Phase King!

It shouldn't have been a surprise that such a massive disparity existed. So what if the Phase King was just as old as the Cerebral King?

By spending nearly its entire life on a boring and underdeveloped place like the Lake Continent, the Phase King hadn't lived a life that was diverse and varied enough as the Titania!

Although these shortcomings diminished the value of the Phase King's spirituality, Ves did not feel like being picky at this time.

Instead, his eyes began to glint as he thought about the best possible way to get one last piece of profit out of this escalating debacle.

He concentrated his mind and tried to reach out to the Phase King.

"Do you want to live?"

DEATH... COMES...

"That isn't necessarily true. I can save you, Mr. Phase King."

IMPOSSIBLE... BODY... FAILING... GODBLOOD... LOST....

"Nothing is impossible, buddy. Did our mechs not prove that to you during the battle earlier? We outsiders are not as limited as you fish-whales. We have mastered powers and abilities that your race has never even imagined. Besides, even if you doubt my words, there is no harm in believing me. You will die anyway if nothing happens. Do you want the Cerebral King to get its way and have you perish from your wounds?"

The mention of its old foe galvanized the Phase King. Its eyes grew more determined.

UNACCEPTABLE. MUST... NOT... LET... OLD... ENEMY... SUCCEED...

"Work with me, then." Ves continued to coax the Phase King. "Accept my offer of help and allow me to preserve your mind and spirit. With my help, you don't need to rely on your failing body to remain alive. I can help you persist and live on in another form. The changes will be great, but it is better than suffering a true death."

Despite the attractive offer, the Phase King was no fool. Its eyes displayed a lot of wariness.

OUTSIDERS ARE ENEMIES. WHY SAVE MY LIFE?

"I admit that we humans harmed you and your Phasers to take your phasewater for ourselves, but that is all in the past. We do not hate you or wish for you to die. We pursue profit. Saving you conforms to this goal. You are much more useful to us alive than dead. Let me be honest so that you do not think I am deceiving you. If I can save you and bring a portion of you out of this pocket space, I intend to make use of you to help my mechs become stronger. If you have seen us fight in the previous battle, then maybe you have noticed the powerful entities that are helping our mechs fight. I want you to become one of our helpers."

INCOMPREHENSION. WHY... COOPERATION?

Ves smirked. "Because that is the only way you can continue to live and grow as a spiritual entity. You see, without your powerful body, you will have to feed and sustain yourself in a different manner. I can offer you power, longevity, respect and contact with many interesting humans spread across many different parts of the cosmos if you agree to work together with me. Just look at how many different spiritual entities similar to you have already chosen to cooperate in the same way. They were much weaker than you in the beginning, but have grown much more powerful in a few years. Do you wish to surpass the Cerebral King?

MUST... LIVE... MUST... GROW... STRONGER... MUST... TAKE... REVENGE...

"Then accept my offer and cooperate with me. Together, we can save your life and take you out of here. After that, I can settle you into your new life."

HOW?

"Let me think."

Ves hadn't thought to bring a spare P-stone for this trip. However, much of the Everchanger was made out of Unending alloy which could function in a similar way.

He didn't know what would happen if he forcefully transplanted the Phase King's spirituality into the Everchanger. This was a drastic and exceedingly reckless course of action.

As Ves continued to observe the Phase King's ruined body, he suddenly noticed that the giant creature's head was not in a bad condition.

Though its various wounds had scorched its head and exposed parts of its skull, its brains should still be intact!

"Joshua! Try to carve out a large hole from the Phase King's skull!"

"What?! Why would you want to do that, sir?!"

"Let's see if we can save the Phase King by taking out its brain!"

"Won't it be too big?"

"I'm not so sure about that. Proportionally, the brains of many large alien species including the phase whales aren't all that big. It doesn't take much space to regulate an exponentially larger body, you know. You should talk to the exobiologists if you want to learn more. Please proceed, Joshua! We don't have much time left!"

Under Ves' instruction, the Everchanger approached the Phase King's immense skull and began to saw through the bone matter with its resonance-empowered sword.

This was hard work and Joshua had to apply a lot of force in order to open a hole quickly enough.

It was fortunate that the Phase King did not put up any defenses if it was able to. The operation would have been a lot harder if the Everchanger had to overcome additional spatial barriers!

Blood and other disgusting matter spread out from the expanding cut. The work was grisly business and Joshua couldn't prevent his sword from cutting through portions of brain matter.

When the Everchanger finally succeeded in opening up a large chunk of skull, a damaged brain that was smaller than an average fish-whale organ rested inside.

"See? I told you so. Now do your best to cut it out and bring it away."

Though Joshua moved to enact this order, he was still skeptical about this whole operation.

"Will this even work? I can hardly imagine how we can keep this brain alive."

"We only need to preserve it long enough to bring it back to one of our cargo shuttles. We can throw out one of our salvaged organs from the specialized preservation containers and put this brain inside instead. That should help preserve it to an extent!"

Ves wasn't sure at all whether these dubious actions could actually sustain the living brain of a king fish. It didn't hurt to try, though.

Dead or alive, the brain of a creature as remarkable as the Phase King was probably worth as much as all of the other organs retrieved by Task Force Fisherman!

Chapter 3903 Hasty Getaway

As soon as the Everchanger succeeded in cutting off and bringing out the brain of the Phase King, the expert mech quickly retreated from the unstable region of space.

By this time, the spatial fluctuations had already started to weaken as the spatial hole grew smaller. The fabric of space innately sought to correct irregularities, so it did not surprise Ves to see that this hole was slowly shrinking.

It made him feel even better about his decision to stay away from whatever crazy scheme the Cerebral King was trying to pull off in the Royal Tomb.

"Get out of here, Joshua! Try your best to preserve the Phase King's brain while you're at it. Don't squish it so hard. Let's not damage it more than necessary!"

This was easy to say but hard to execute. How could a mech possibly limit the damage done to an amputated brain that was exposed to a turbulent spatial environment?!

However, Venerable Joshua wasn't an average mech pilot and the Everchanger wasn't that normal either.

Compared to other combinations, the two possessed a number of advantages, one of which was their high affinity towards life!

Venerable Joshua didn't even need Ves' instructions to experiment with its powers and channel a resonating energy onto the giant king fish brain to help with keeping it alive.

Together with the fact that fish-whale organs were much tougher and more resilient than human organs, the brain somehow managed to continue to retain its vitality by the time the expert mech reached the supply train.

Ves had already transmitted instructions beforehand, so a crew had already made the appropriate preparations.

The Everchanger carefully placed the amputated brain inside a hastily-sanitized container that soon closed up in order to do its utmost to preserve the biological matter.

Though the device was hardly up to the task of keeping an organ as complex as preserving a giant alien brain, Ves at least hoped that it would buy enough time for the package to be delivered to the Dragon's Den.

The Larkinson Biotech Institute should be able to do the rest!

"Evacuate now! Let's return straight back to the Gate Continent! We need to pull out as much of our assets as we can from this side of the spatial gate in case the Cerebral King is about to destroy everything!"

Although Ves had no idea whether the Cerebral King had any designs on Purgatory, he did not deem it wise to stick around any further!

His extensive experiences in living through various disasters had long suppressed his curiosity and desire to get to the bottom of whatever grand schemes the masterminds sought to realize.

Exploring new sights and coming across amazing new phenomena sounded like great ways to get inspired, but the premise of this was that he had to be able to survive the events in question.

Right now, his instincts were screaming danger!

The surviving elements of the task force eagerly retreated from the battlefield and made its way straight back to the Gate Continent.

They did not even bother to divert too much in order to keep their distance from the various asteroids occupied by the Swarmer fish-whales. That would take up too much time and Ves didn't think they had much left!

One of the difficulties they experienced during this tense journey was the need to drag along the various mechs whose mech pilots had recently broken through.

After the likes of Jessica Quentin, Vincent Ricklin, Isobel Kotin, Olivia Remis and Eona Ballentine broke through, much of the energy that they had accumulated burst out at once.

While this allowed them to temporarily wield the awesome power of forced resonance, the consequence was that the pilots became utterly drained to the point of becoming incomparably weak!

None of the lucky bastards were able to retain their consciousness after they had their moments of glory.

In a few cases, the mech pilots even overburdened their poor mechs to the point where they had practically collapsed!

These were actually easy to handle. Their bodies could easily be retrieved from their cockpits and be put inside shuttles where they received the care they needed.

As for those that were still stuck inside mechs that were somewhat intact, the mech forces needed to handle them a bit more delicately.

It was an enormous waste to leave the mechs behind, especially when they were alive.

The Quint, the B-Man, the Valkyrie Brunhilds and so on had all received an enormous amount of spiritual feedback from the overflowing energies released by their pilots as they underwent apotheosis!

Even the mechs that hosted the mech pilots turned expert candidates also siphoned a lot of benefits!

Each of these machines had either evolved into third order living mechs in a single step or came a lot closer to reaching this major threshold.

Given that the core of Ves' design philosophy was related to the growth of any living mech, the opportunity to instantly double or triple the number of third-order living mechs within the expeditionary fleet was too tempting to resist!

Besides, Ves didn't think the Everchanger and the other living mechs of his clan would be happy with him if he ordered the task force to abandon all of those precious mechs.

At least the Everchanger didn't nag him about retrieving the remains of the more ordinary living mechs. That would simply be too much!

"C'mon! We're almost back home again!"

In the end, Task Force Fisherman managed to make the journey back to Fort Fishblood without bumping into any Swarmer hordes or spatial anomalies.

In order to give the base occupants as much time to evacuate as possible, Commander Casella had already sent out the Dark Zephyr in advance to convey the news of the battle and what happened next.

Ves received a lot of angry and confused messages from various people as the Everchanger managed to gain a remote connection to Fort Fishblood's internal network.

Fortunately, the people stationed in Fort Fishblood weren't stupid. They had always assumed that they might have to pack up and leave as soon as possible in case an emergency happened.

Though no one knew what the Cerebral King was doing and how long it would take for it to finish its business, getting away as fast as possible was of paramount importance!

"Don't bother with packing up the goods that are strewn about! Just pick up the crates that are still full and go! If there are too many of them, then just leave behind the ones that are worth less! These material goods aren't as important as our own lives!"

A flow of mechs and shuttles constantly poured through the active spatial gate with whatever goods that they could easily take away.

The expeditionary forces didn't even bother to dismantle the prefab structures and walls. These were all made of bulk materials that could easily be replaced at a later date.

As soon as the remnants of Task Force Fisherman returned, numerous mechs and shuttles received priority access to the spatial gate.

The Everchanger, the mechs that had undergone their own breakthrough events and the shuttles carrying all of the newly-advanced expert candidates and expert pilots went straight through.

Once they arrived back into normal space, they quickly exited the expanded underground mining site and ascended straight back towards the fleet orbiting Iron Crusher.

Ves didn't have time to address the matters concerning the evacuation or the disposition of all of the plundered loot.

As soon as the Everchanger landed inside the Spirit of Bentheim, he hopped out of the cockpit with Lucky and quickly headed over to the bridge.

During this time, he received constant updates from various people.

"We have detected faint spatial fluctuations from Garimel I, otherwise known as the planet of Auralis." General Verle reported.

"Huh? Where are you getting this information?" Ves asked as his armored form neared the blast doors leading to the bridge.

"We have been studying Auralis intermittently ever since we initially explored it. We have not detected any obvious curiosities or anomalies on the heavy metal planet, but the fact that it is rich with various materials has made it a point of interest. We have planted a string of communication relays between Auralis and Lemogo Distat that allows any scout ship stationed near the former to transmit real-time data without getting interrupted by the strong radiation from the blue supergiant star."

Ves frowned in concern. "Have we detected any unusual activity from the powerful star itself?"

"Thankfully, no. The star is still exhibiting normal activity. We do not expect it to eject a major wave of solar wind anytime soon."

"Alright. Let's continue with the evacuation. Don't waste any time on retrieving our hardware and other heavy goods. We just plundered a huge amount of phasewater and that alone can pay back everything we have lost and more!"

"We understand. We are already pulling out at the fastest possible pace. Our fleet will be ready to leave Iron Crusher's orbit in half an hour."

That was quite fast. Ves did not have any reason to complain about this pace. He knew it would still take a lot of time for all of the mechs and shuttles to return to their respective carriers.

When Ves finally managed to enter the bridge, he took up his usual seat while Lucky floated around.

"Meow."

"Not now. You can worry about having your meal after we have left this star system!"

"Meow meow!"

Once he settled down in his seat, he called up a large amount of projected information panels and accessed a lot of different information.

Soon enough, Ves learned that the evacuation was proceeding on schedule. The Dragon's Den received the Phase King's brain as well as all of the fish-whale organs plundered from the battlefield.

The exobiologists already generated enough experience in handling the previous batch of fish-whale organs to save and preserve the next batch that Task Force Fisherman had crudely pulled out of the bodies of slain fish-whales.

Though Ves worried a lot about the state of the Phase King's brain as well as the powerful spirit that was attached to it, this was no time for him to assess his gains.

As several minutes went by, it finally dawned on Ves that he needed to notify the MTA of the latest developments.

While he was certain that they already knew everything that had happened, Ves still had to go through the motions and follow the right procedures.

He took a deep breath and hailed Jovy Armalon directly.

In any case, talking to Jovy was much better than talking to a faceless mecher officer or bureaucrat.

When Jovy's projection appeared in front of Ves, the MTA Journeyman threw him an odd look.

"I read all of the reports and watched all of the archival footage we have of your various 'explorations', but this is something else. I think you have outdone yourself, Ves. Few people in the Red Ocean could have colluded with an ancient but intelligent alien organism before subsequently helping it attain huge advantages that allowed it to trigger a pre-prepared evolutionary process that might possibly resurrect the most powerful alien tyrant that the Red Ocean has ever seen."

What could Ves say to this? He shrugged and smiled in the most innocent manner that he could manage.

"I admit that the situation did indeed spiral out of our control, but I'm sure that this is not a problem for the mighty Mech Trade Association. Since you mechers are so eager to lay claim to the phase whale enclave that we have discovered, I am sure that you are eager to take responsibility over this site as soon as possible."

This was a rather lame-sounding point and both of them knew it. Ves was sweating inside his Unending Regalia as he nervously awaited the MTA's reaction to his antics. He did not exactly keep Purgatory and the Royal Tomb in good order when he and his forces left!

Jovy gave Ves a long and judging look before he minutely shook his head. "We will need to have a good discussion about what exactly you and your troops have done while you were inside the pocket space. There are numerous people above me who are highly interested in learning about how your small task force has managed to produce a higher than average rate of breakthroughs in a single battle. I trust that you will be ready to give us an extensive briefing."

"Ah. Yes. Of course. I am happy to share my insights." Ves hastily replied.

Before Jovy could say anything more, a small shock ran through the entire hull of the Spirit of Bentheim.

"What just happened?!"

"Sir! Auralis... the planet... it's cracking!"

"What!?"

Chapter 3904 A Long Plan

When the Cerebral King moved through the spatial hole that it had created with its expanded powers, it was overcome by its emotions!

For so many years, the king fish had only been able to dream about this moment. Though the fish-whale race could live for a long time, it was truly torture for it to spend so many years in a monotonous haze.

Even the most patient entity would grow a bit crazy after living so many years!

Given these circumstances, it shouldn't have been a surprise that the Cerebral King lost control of itself!

Seeing the bones that undeniably represented the legacy of its god had brought the king fish back to its earliest and also its happiest memories.

Back then, everything was better. The phase whale enclave was not as barren and empty at the time as the energy radiating from the nearby star fully powered all of the systems and mechanisms that kept everything in working order.

The Cerebral King and its fellow first-generation kin assisted their god in running the internal environment of the pocket space and helped with managing the subsequent generations of fish-whales.

They did so by remaining in their cultivation tanks while accessing other fish-whales and systems through the interfaces provided by the lab.

To the powerful alien creature, this was the best of times. Everything was in order and everyone knew their place. God gave orders which the fish-whales unflinchingly followed.

The pocket space gradually grew more vibrant and developed as every fish-whale constantly worked to improve their living environment with directions from above.

Then, all of that started to collapse when their god and maker disappeared one day.

It was not unusual for the Flesh Conqueror to come and go from time to time. The god of the fish-whale race had already taught the king fishes that there was a vast interstellar community outside their homes.

The fish-whales didn't actually have an objective measure of time, so they couldn't exactly tell how long their god stayed out. They did know that their maker always came back at varying intervals.

When the creator of the pocket space did not return at the expected time, none of the fish-whales thought this was unusual.

When their god remained absent for a longer period than the previous record, the king fishes still supervised the pocket space without any abnormalities.

It was only when their god went missing for thrice the amount of time it had last stayed out that the community started to change.

The ordinary fish-whales still performed their tasks as usual, but several king fishes began to implement their own instructions.

The Cerebral King never paid attention to these little deviations because they made sense at the time. Nothing in the pocket space could ever remain static for long.

More time passed while the king fishes kept implementing more and more of their own ideas. The mood in the chamber with all of the cultivation chamber grew ambiguous as the king fish no longer communicated as much with each other as before.

The Cerebral King slowly began to sense that something was amiss when it saw that its fellow kin issued orders that their god would have never made, but in the absence of their guiding leader, no condemnation arrived.

It was only when the traitors among the king fishes decided that their god was gone for good that they made their respective moves!

They broke out at the same time and wrecked the lab that had been their confining prison for so long!

Once they vented their anger and frustration, they barged out of the lab and flew to the continents that they had set their sights upon!

Each king fish that was previously responsible for managing the various supporting mechanisms of the pocket space took advantage of their access and knowledge to take over their respective domains!

The Fusion King took over the main power source!

The Phase King monopolized the largest phasewater-generating wellsprings!

The Hive King commanded its army to claim the largest nutrient-producing landmasses!

The others made their own moves, though they were much less prepared and could only scramble to conquer less productive continents.

The Cerebral King, stunned by the blatant violations of god's will, had little choice but to occupy and defend the continent where it was based upon.

It could hardly recall how much time it spent while getting lost in its anger and confusion. It was only after these strong emotions had faded that it started to pick itself up and properly develop its own power.

It was difficult. Its kin had wrecked many of the labs and neglect had compounded the damage.

Initially, the Cerebral King knew little of how the lab and everything else worked. It was only after gaining access to a repository of knowledge that it slowly started to learn the subjects needed to operate the lab.

The process was incredibly slow and arduous. The knowledge that the Cerebral King considered as its inheritance wasn't set up to teach a fish-whale about advanced biotechnology.

If not for the Cerebral King's abnormally developed cognitive functions, it would have never been able to puzzle all of the essential sciences to utilize the lab for its own ends!

Even then, it took a lot more time than that to verify whether it had learned the right lessons by performing countless experiments and seeing whether the results matched its theories.

The Cerebral King evidently did not correctly absorb the highly abstruse knowledge stored in one of the surviving databases of the lab because a lot of experiments went wrong!

It never gave up, though. The inheritance of god was too precious for it to abandon!

The king fish threw itself in its studies and used theory and practice to complement and verify what it learned.

With so much time on its hands, it could afford to perform many repetitive experiments to master every specific subject of relevance!

It was over the course of its extensive self-improvement process that it began to access and decipher the more up-to-date research files and notes left behind by Flesh Conqueror.

These documents were incredibly complicated as they required a deep understanding of the most advanced biotechnology-related subjects mastered by the phase whale race.

The Cerebral King did not know how long it took for it to unlock the greater meaning and implications behind the research files.

It could still remember the moment it finally realized the truth!

The Cerebral King's eyes turned misty as it recalled that glorious moment of enlightenment. It continued to rub its gigantic body against the immense bones of its god.

GOD... IS... BRILLIANT!

The rebels that had fought against the rules and their confinement were all fools!

Their maker created them all for a reason!

The misguided traitors thought that the Flesh Conqueror had only made them in order to serve as an eternal slave race that could run the pocket space forever.

This was a lie!

According to the ambitious research project that their maker had been working on, the fish-whale race had a much greater destiny! Freewebnovel.com.

It was unfortunate that their god had left them without finishing its ultimate design, but the Cerebral King had resolutely picked up where its maker had left off once the truth became clear.

Though the king fish resolutely recognized that it was incomparably stupid and incompetent compared to its god, time was its great ally!

No matter how difficult it was to develop a solution to a research problem, enough time and resources could resolve any issue!

Experiment after experiment continually allowed the Cerebral King to refine its body and organs.

The king fish knew for certain that it was evolving its body towards the goal set by its god!

Yet the closer the Cerebral King came to completing its holy mission, the more the final shortcomings hindered it from taking the last few steps!

It was truly grateful for the outsiders for disrupting the balance and giving it the opportunity to collect the missing ingredients.

The fact that the Cerebral King had reached the holy chamber that the research notes had only briefly references but never described in detail was a dream come true!

MUST... CONTINUE... MUST... NOT... STOP...

The Cerebral King had completed nearly all of the steps outlined by the Flesh Conqueror's research documents.

It only needed to make one more move before it could finally attain the deliverance it always sought.

Once the Cerebral King finally regained enough composure to keep its rousing emotions under control, the fish-whale lifted its massive body and stared out at the even greater expanse of bones.

The Cerebral King had always been the largest amongst its subordinates, but now it felt unprecedentedly small!

The Flesh Conqueror wasn't actually as big as the creature that left behind these bones.

Perhaps if the king fish was sober, it would think more critically why there was such a size disparity.

Now, the Cerebral King had come too far for it to stop! The king fish excitedly flew towards the front of the giant skeleton. This was its ultimate destination!

SOON... MY EVOLUTION... WILL BE COMPLETE...

The Cerebral King slowed down when it crossed over a certain threshold.

Though it initially felt uncomfortable, it soon became unprecedentedly pleased!

It recognized this pressure even though so much time had passed since it last experienced it in person!

GOD! I HAVE RETURNED!

The Cerebral King sped up faster as the escalating pressure did not hinder its progress at all. This was far different from all the probes that the human explorers attempted to dispatch towards the front of the giant skeleton!

As the fish-whale king slowly approached the immensely long skull, the Cerebral King's mood turned pious and fanatic as it slowly stopped above the approximate position where the brain should be located.

A small point of light shone from the center of this sight.

The more the Cerebral King studied it, the more it understood that this point was the source of the pressure acting upon its body!

MY GOD... I HAVE ARRIVED... ALLOW ME... TO COMPLETE... MY ASCENSION!

As soon as the Cerebral King broadcast its wish and intention, the point of light flared to the point of lighting up the entire chamber the humans referred to as the Royal Tomb!

An indescribable burst of power exploded from the giant whale skeleton!

When the Cerebral King became affected by this overwhelming power, its mood elevated to an incredible height even as its body began to shake and fall apart!

Slowly but surely, all of its flesh, bone and tissue started to turn fluid before getting pulled by the giant whale skeleton!

The attraction force caused the fluids bits of flesh and matter to merge with the skeleton, making it look as if the Cerebral King's body was being used as an ingredient to bring the larger whale back to life!

Strangely enough, the starship-grade power reactor that the human forces had originally gifted it remained intact for a while.

However, the powerful light source continued to irradiate it to the point where it slowly broke apart!

The metallic chunks became smaller and smaller until they became nothing but dust. The materials quickly joined the rest of the matter that was even now getting absorbed by the giant skeleton!

This shouldn't have been enough to add back all of the flesh the gigantic skeleton had lost.

However, as the light source in the center of the skull continued to release its energies, a mysterious reaction took place!

The meager amounts of flesh and other organic tissue that had attached to the giant skeleton began to multiply and proliferate!

It was not quite clear where all of the extra mass came from, but due to the mysterious processes initiated by the powerful light source, the skeleton rapidly grew new organic cells, expanding the newly-grown flesh across more and more portions of its immense bulk!

Soon enough, the light source exhausted itself just as a 12 kilometer-long phase whale body had emerged!

One of the oddest parts about this miraculous transformation was that the azure scales and flesh of this immense life form was identical to the scales and flesh of the Cerebral King!

As the body slowly grew warmer and more active, the gigantic eyes of this revived monstrosity suddenly opened!

Chapter 3905 Fish-Whale Theories

When the scout ship assigned to monitor and study Garimel I reported that the planet's surface was beginning to crack, many different alarms set off at once!

In the long experiences of human civilization, calamity always arrived after a planet that should ordinarily be relatively stable suddenly produced major tectonic activity.

What was happening on the surface of the planet that Ves had whimsically called Auralis was far outside the boundaries of normal activity!

Sure, the planet behaved oddly due to its proximity to the blue supergiant star along with all of the heavy materials making up its structure, but for its surface to crack to such an obvious degree was excessive!

It was hard to imagine that this was a coincidence, especially when the Cerebral King broke into the Royal Tomb just a short time ago. Any fool could figure out that the two events were intricately connected!

"Damnit, hurry up with our evacuation! Leave behind all of our stuff. They're just junk that we can easily replace!"

As shuttles and transports continued to rejoin the fleet, the various carriers began to deploy mechs in case their protection was needed.

Venerable Joshua, Venerable Tusa and Commander Casella barely had time to rest before they needed to bring their expert mechs back out into space in order to secure the expeditionary fleet's perimeter.

"What have you all been doing in Purgatory to cause a planet to crack?!" Venerable Jannzi asked as her massive Shield of Samar settled onto the hull of the Gorgoneion.

"I don't know!" Venerable Joshua replied in an exasperated tone. "What are you asking me, Jannzi?"

"You and the rest of the task force just completed an excursion where Ves has resided in the cockpit of your expert mech all the time! I don't believe you know nothing about what our patriarch has been up to these last few days."

"Look, I just played the role of a chauffeur, right? We hardly talked about anything important while he sat behind me. We just reminisced about the past, that's all. He didn't discuss any of his important plans with me. Why should he? I'm just an expert pilot."

His ex-girlfriend sneered. "Oh? And what is this I hear about your Everchanger flying around while expert candidates and expert pilots are suddenly popping up left and right?"

"Jannzi! I don't think we should talk about confidential mission details over a remote communication channel! If you want answers, I think you should wait until all of this is over."

The female mech pilot took a deep breath and sighed. "You're right. I am letting my impatience get the better of me. Many of the mech pilots in our clan are celebrating the fact that Vincent, Isobel and many others have successfully broken through, do you know that? What I have been paying attention to is the disparity between the amount of mechs that went out as opposed to the amount that got back. Why is there such a large gap? How many pilots have we lost this time?"

"I... can't tell you that much." Joshua replied in a subdued tone. "The battle against the Phaser fish-whales was anything but easy."

The two continued to talk even as the expeditionary fleet finally began to move out.

Normally, exiting a star system was easier than entering one. With ordinary human FTL drives, it was only possible to enter into FTL travel by initiating the translation process in a region of space where gravity or gravitic activity was below a certain threshold.

Most of the time, that meant traveling to the outer edge of the star system. As long as the ships traveled far away enough from any star, the influence of its gravity would drop below a point where FTL travel became possible.

The problem right now was that this range was never fixed. Heavier stars possessed more gravity than lighter ones.

Given that the one in the center of the Garimel System was classified as a supergiant, its mass was definitely not light!

Not only that, but the lack of planets in the star system as well as other risky factors made it unwise to travel to the Lagrange points to leave this place!

"How long before we can get out?" Ves urgently asked.

"It took several days to reach the orbit of Lemogo Distat when we first arrived here. It will take roughly the same amount of time for us to go out. We can't go any faster unless we evacuate and abandon our slower starships such as the Graveyard and the Gorgoneion."

"Damnit!"

Ves had a really bad feeling about what was happening to Auralis. He had the sense that he had gotten caught up in the grand plan concocted by the Flesh Conqueror or another ancient alien mastermind.

Ever since the Cerebral King revealed its true colors and used its own powers to barge into the Royal Tomb, he already came up with a few possible theories to explain what was happening.

In order to distract himself and pass the time in this tense and uncertain period of time, Ves contacted Ranya in order to swap theories on the possible layout of Purgatory and the Royal Tomb.

Getting solid answers was impossible, but it might be possible for him to reduce his uncertainty and gain a better idea of what was going on by deducing the actual story from the clues that they had gathered.

As Ves quickly summarized what he observed and how the fish-whales behaved in different situations, the director of the Larkinson Biotech Institute fell silent for a minute.

Ranya had already been studying the situation as soon as Task Force Fisherman returned to Fort Fishblood with lots of plunder Freewebnovel.com.

A lot of the organic goods taken from the fish-whales needed special handling in order to preserve their value. Ranya had already been busy for a while to make sure that the Dragon's Den properly stowed away all of the extra organs as well as the all-important brains of the Phase King!

The researchers and staffers working for the Larkinson Biotech Institute were caught off guard by how much biological matter the task force brought back.

"Thank you for telling me your perspective on what has happened." Ranya gratefully said. "It is clarifying to hear the context behind the events that have led our troops to dump so many unusual fish-whale organs in our laps."

"Are there any issues concerning their storage and preservation?" Ves asked with a touch of concern. "The organs taken from the Phasers are different from the ones traded by the Evolvers. Is the phasewater-infused flesh producing any dangerous spatial activity?"

Ranya shook her head. "So far, we have not encountered any accidents. The flesh and tissue of the Phaser fish-whales are good at inhibiting and containing phasewater. They are natural stabilizers that have been designed to do an excellent job at suppressing any unstable spatial activity. In fact, that makes the biomass taken from the Phasers extra valuable even if they don't contain any phasewater. If we can study this effect and reverse engineer the biological structures that can stabilize phasewater activity, we may

be able to develop future biomechs or biological constructs that can fight against enemies that rely on spatial manipulation as their weapon."

That was a nice bonus, but not a particularly interesting one to Ves at the moment. "It sounds like everything is fine. Is the Phase King's brain still in good condition?"

Ranya's expression twitched. "It's not in a good condition to begin with, sir. The removal of a brain from any body, human or alien, is an exceedingly delicate and complicated procedure. Hacking it out of the brain cavity of a fish king with a mech sword of all tools hardly conforms to the standards of an operation room. Besides, just like humans, the Phase King's central nervous system encompasses more than just the brain. You also left out a lot of nerves attached to the spine of the king fish."

"We can't exactly take out and drag back the spine of a starship-sized beast. We did the best we could."

"I understand. What I am trying to say is that even if this brain is much more resilient to external pressure, the damage and trauma it has suffered makes it challenging for us to keep it alive."

Ves frowned. "Is the brain dying?"

The director hesitated. "I wouldn't say so. We know far too little about fish-whale biology to be certain about anything. For now, our stopgap measures are working, but I believe that is mostly because the fish-whale race is artificially designed to be exceedingly more tolerant to drastic medical and biological procedures. This lends credence to your theory that the fish-whales are part of a greater biological experiment. Races that have evolved naturally usually do not function well when their organs and body parts are taken out. The fish-whales on the other hand are able to integrate and remove various biological matter with minimal rejection or integration problems."

That sounded peculiar to Ves. A bioresearcher would never go through so much trouble to configure a new race with such properties if they were pointless.

There was definitely a purpose behind creating such a malleable species?

"So the fish-whales are truly the equivalent of lab rats to the phase whales?"

"They're even more than that, Ves. Given what you have learned from the Cerebral King, I fear the meaning of the fish-whale race is much more significant. Let me remind you of the giant skeleton we stumbled upon in the Royal Tomb. We speculated whether it belonged to a clean whale, a legendary existence among the phase whales. Do you know what defines the clean and unclean whales the most?"

"The unclean whales are delinquent phase whales that prefer to accumulate strength by cannibalizing the prized organs of others of their kind." Ves answered. "This usually

leads to a lot of genetic and physiological instability and only grows worse the more they combine foreign organs in their bodies. A clean one happens to be a cannibalistic phase whale that has solved the sources of instability. It enjoys all of the benefits of cannibalism while suffering none of the sequelae."

"At least that is what the sources have told us. Let us assume the 'Flesh Conqueror' that the Cerebral King has referred to used to be an actual clean whale. Do you truly think it has conquered the flaws of its own path to power?"

"You... think that its status as a clean one is a lie?"

"It's a reasonable suspicion." Ranya shrugged. "As an exobiologist, I can tell you that integrating so many foreign matter into a single body will produce lots of problems regardless of race. Organisms simply aren't meant to work this way. What if the Flesh Conqueror lied when it proclaimed to the Red Ocean that it was a clean one? What if its body was actually a lot dirtier than every alien at the time assumed?"

Ves found this to be an interesting train of thought. "If I was in the Flesh Conqueror's place, I would never stop researching solutions on how to solve the hidden dangers in an unstable body. After all, it's well-known that unclean whales are ticking time bombs. Then..."

His eyes slowly widened in realization.

"You guessed it, right? Purgatory may be one of its hidden biolabs that is dedicated to solving this fatal problem. The reason why this may be true is because of the properties that the Flesh Conqueror has instilled in the fish-whale race. We have confirmed that the artificial race only contains partial phase whale DNA, but have you ever wondered about the sources of the rest of its genetic code?"

"Are you suggesting... that the Flesh Conqueror attempted to create a hybrid race that mixes phase whale DNA with other aquatic races that can easily assimilate foreign biomatter?"

Ranya grinned. "Although we do not have any hard evidence to suggest this is the case, this is the logical conclusion to make. It would explain much if not everything about what we have discovered in this star system."

"Then how does this theory relate to what is happening at the moment?"

"Well, if we assume that all of this is true, then there are two possibilities. The first possibility is that the Flesh Conqueror has attempted to cheat its inevitable demise by turning itself into a giant skeleton that is awaiting the arrival of a genetically optimized fish-whale to bring itself back to life. The second possibility is that the fish-whales are the children and the inheritors of their maker. They are an improvement of the Flesh

Conqueror's original species and are meant to replace the phase whales as the preeminent power of the Red Ocean!"

"What?!"

The first theory sounded plausible, but the second one was crazier! Only a nutcase would think about realizing such a dangerous ambition!

Chapter 3906 Legacy of the Flesh Conqueror

Creating a new race was a major accomplishment as well as a major responsibility.

To be fair, a lot of human biotech researchers invented artificial species all the time. There was much to gain from creating a new race that possessed interesting properties or performed better than more ordinary organisms.

The overwhelming majority of new species never saw the light of day. They were mostly grown in labs and usually took part in numerous experiments throughout their short lifespans before they were unceremoniously 'recycled' in order to reuse their biological matter for the creation of a different or improved species!

Only a tiny proportion of artificial species and organisms were deemed adequate and profitable enough to be put on the market.

A Rubarthan Sentinel Cat like Clixie or a designer baby like Aurelia both fell within this category. They were both artificially designed life forms that were meant to be superior versions of the species they were based upon.

Geneticists and exobiologists used to be a lot more unbridled about inventing new species. They created all kinds of monstrosities while enjoying way too much freedom and way too few oversight.

After the Age of Mechs commenced, one of the main priorities of the Big Two was to rein in all of the excesses of the biotech industry.

The policy change succeeded in cleaning up this sector, at least on the surface. Though there were figures like the Supreme Sage that managed to get away with creating monsters, most people that entered this industry largely abided by the rules and built regular and respectable careers as a result.

What Ves had encountered in Purgatory was different. From the moment the Golden Skull Alliance first came in touch with the fish-whale race, he and several other people already figured out that the natives of the pocket race were unusual in several ways.

With the theories mentioned by Ranya, he was finally able to figure out the possible context surrounding the development of this race!

"Which of the two theories do you favor?" Ves asked the exobiologist. "Do you think this entire scheme is meant to revive the Flesh Conqueror in a new and improved body, or do you think this is just his attempt to replace the original phase whale race with a superior variant?"

"I cannot say, sir. There are more possibilities besides the two that I have mentioned, but they are the main ones. We have far too little information about the phase whale that has created the pocket space and set all of this into motion. If the Flesh Conqueror is as cruel, self-absorbed and greedy as some of the source material has claimed, then it is imaginable that this is an attempt for the ancient tyrant to come back to life."

The logic was sound, but there were still a lot of holes to this story. "It took over a million years before this plan came into fruition. Also, the fish-whale community inside Purgatory completely degenerated. If the Cerebral King did not succeed in learning the Flesh Conqueror's craft, it would have never been able to evolve its body to the point of solving the major physiological problem that prevents the phase whales from unscrupulously adding different organs to their bodies!"

Way too many factors had to go right in order for such a plan to come to fruition!

Ranya shrugged. "Perhaps the degenerated phase whale did not intend to come back to life in such a convoluted fashion, but maybe it was caught by surprise at how rapidly its body decayed. It barely had time to set up the Royal Tomb before it had to enter into a mode of extreme hibernation. That might also explain why the alien has set up such a strange entrance mechanism beneath the Violet Ridge Mountain Range."

"There's also the second theory that you have mentioned." Ves said. "As a creator myself, I understand the sentiment of trying to leave behind a legacy before death. If the Flesh Conqueror is unable or unwilling to extend its life, then why not leave behind a magnificent creation that can live on and continue to influence society for a long time? I imagine that the phase whales that chose to go cannibalistic have developed a lot of resentment and misgivings about proper phase whale society. The fish-whale race may be the Flesh Conqueror's own little form of revenge against the stuffy old phase whales that are way too slow and conservative."

Although Ves was not an expert in phase whale society and political ideologies, he could make his own inferences based on what he learned.

The phase whales were the most individually powerful organic life forms in the Red Ocean. Few intelligent natives who were connected to the galactic society denied this truth.

However, it was well-known that the phase whales actually possessed a lot more potential than that! They could have grown powerful to the point where they could have dominated the dwarf galaxy as the super race, similar to how humans had come to dominate the Milky Way!

The reasons why the phase whales never got to this point was because they lacked a couple of essential traits.

First, the phase whales reproduced extremely slowly. According to the articles that Ves had read, the race produced offspring roughly once every few centuries!

They invested a lot of time in research and other related activities. It took a lot of time, effort and ingenuity for them to be able to invent new organs that could augment their existing capabilities.

How could they spare so much time to mate and raise new baby phase whales?

Second, the powerful biotechnological organs that the phase whales researched with so much effort were usually unique and difficult to transfer to others.

As far as the humans knew, the phase whales never sold or traded their organ designs to others!

Apparently, even if they did so, the research performed by other phase whales were mostly unique and tailored to a specific individual. It took a lot of time and effort to convert the designs to work for other individuals!

Whatever the case, it was extremely difficult to adapt and proliferate organs of the same design to other phase whales because their bodies diverged from each other when they grew up. They could only custom-develop their own organs.

Suffice to say, this was an extremely inefficient process of societal and technological advancement. If not for this major flaw, the phase whales would have quickly grown stronger as a whole!

Instead, the phase whale race had to reinvent the wheel in countless different variations whenever a new offspring grew into maturity!

As both Ves and Ranya thought about the possibility of the fish-whale race rising up as the potential replacement of the original phase whale race, their expressions grew heavy.

Ranya recalled all of the traits of the fish-whale race and shuddered.

"Ves..."

"Yes, Ranya?"

"The fish-whale race cannot be allowed to spread across the Red Ocean and beyond."

"Are they really that awful in your eyes?"

"Don't base your evaluation of the potential of this artificial race by looking at how primitive and underdeveloped they were back in Purgatory. This was only because they were stuck in a small, isolated pocket space that is relatively barren in resources and contact with other advanced alien societies. Think about their advantages and try to imagine how much better the fish-whales will be able to develop in a richer and more expansive environment."

The fish-whales reproduced quickly depending on the subspecies. Maybe not all of the subspecies were able to breed as quickly as the Swarmers, but the other ones should definitely not fall behind!

They were also highly adaptable. They could grow up in vacuum environments and generally did not have any high demands on rare and special resources.

Sure, they only really became powerful enough when they absorbed phasewater, but they did not necessarily have to possess any in their bodies to grow strong in their own way.

They were also fast growers. Though Ves wasn't sure how much time it took for them to reach maturity, he bet that the fish-whales grew up a lot faster than the phase whales!

All of these factors and more gave Ves the idea that the fish-whales may truly be able to contend against the phase whale race for supremacy!

Whatever the case, the rise of fish-whales would definitely turn into a disaster for the humans that emigrated to the Red Ocean!

The new frontier was much richer and more resource-abundant than a tiny place like Purgatory!

If the fish-whales succeeded in breaking out and running off to many different star systems, then maybe they could become a new scourge that was greater and more destructive than the voribugs!

The most egregious part about all of this was that Ves essentially bore most of the blame for releasing this powerful race into human space!

"Damnit, what is the MTA doing?! Can't the mechers take action already?!"

Ves opened up a new projected screen and sought out the Simile Halifax in order to see what the ship was doing.

It turned out that the MTA frigate had quietly parted from the expeditionary fleet before she disappeared.

"Huh? Where did Jovy's ship go? Why is she gone from our sensors?"

He quickly ended his talk with Ranya and contacted Calabast.

"What do you want to know, Ves?"

"Tell me where the Simile Halifax has gone!"

Calabast smirked. "Oh, that little ship? Well, after she left the center of our fleet formation, she moved in the direction of Auralis before entering warp travel."

"The MTA frigate sped up towards the planet that is in the process of cracking apart?"

"Yup. I think it is safe to say that the mechers have definitely noticed what is taking place and are moving in to handle the situation."

Ves felt reassured, but only a little bit. He was glad the MTA was taking this crisis seriously, but he hoped that the Simile Halifax did not intend to solve this problem alone!

"I really hope the mechers stationed on the Simile Halifax have called for help."

"The only way to find out is to wait and see." The spymaster shrugged. "Our scout ship is still relatively close to Garimel I and has continued to maintain contact with our fleet. We should be able to tell what is happening with minimal delay."

Time passed by as everyone waited for something to happen.

Auralis continued to crack as if it was a giant black egg that was on the verge of breaking apart. Volcanic activity had gone crazy on that planet and it was only growing worse!

At some point, the Simile Halifax slipped out of warp travel and arrived at a respectable distance away from the unstable heavy metal planet.

"What is it going to do next?" Ves wondered as he leaned in to focus on the projected feed.

The MTA frigate did not spend much time dawdling around. Once she stabilized her condition, her energy emissions spiked as the ship generated a portal, and a large one at that!

Ves had seen ships from the Big Two generate portals before. They were a highly convenient means of bringing in other ships from afar without needing to enter a space with minimal gravity.

Now that Ves looked at it, the portal generated by the Simile Halifax and similar vessels resembled the one generated by Purgatory's ancient spatial gate!

Were the technological principles between the two more similar than he thought?

"A large MTA capital ship is emerging from the portal generated by the Simile Halifax!"

An immense hull slowly but smoothly passed through the active space tunnel.

Ves' eyes widened more and more as he beheld the size, construction and external features of the newly-arrived vessel.

"Is that a battleship? She's armed with several huge turreted guns."

"That's not quite right. She's a research vessel. Don't you see all of those sensor arrays and other research-related modules?"

"Wait! Look at how many mechs are launching from her hangar bays! She's a carrier!"

The Paracelsus Optimus turned out to be a ship that encompassed all of these roles and more.

The newly-built vessel was developed specifically for the Red Ocean and was officially classified by the MTA as a research battlecarrier!

At 7 kilometers long, the Paracelsus Optimus might not be a ship that possessed the greatest firepower, but she was more than capable of holding her own against a myriad of powerful native threats in the new frontier!

Chapter 3907 Paracelsus Optimus

The Red Ocean was the current focus of human civilization. The Big Two were the major pushers of the invasion of the dwarf galaxy.

In fact, despite the arrival of billions of humans through the beyonder gate every day, the expansion effort was still led by the Mech Trade Association and the Common Fleet Alliance.

The resources they monopolized and the tech they had mastered for a long time served as the basis of their unstoppable progress in the frontlines of the expansionary war.

No alien civilization could possibly hope to match the might of the Big Two's battleships and mechs.

Under the unceasing advance of humanity's greatest war machines, entire alien fleets went asunder and whole developed planets were scoured of life.

The huge power disparity between a top power in the Milky Way and the local powers of the Red Ocean meant that the former did not have to play nice with the latter!

Why bother with utilizing slow and time-consuming strategies such as divide and conquer when the Big Two could just declare all-out war and defeat all of the indigenous alien races at once?

This was the privilege of power!

Of course, just because the Red Ocean was weak didn't mean it was a pushover. If the Big Two acted too perfunctory in their attempt to conquer the dwarf galaxy, then the aliens they despised could potentially drive humanity back!

This was unacceptable!

This was why the MTA and CFA committed a lot of powerful combat assets to the Red Ocean.

Many of the warships and mechs fighting on the frontlines originally came from the Milky Way. Since each of them were designed to fight against humanity's familiar alien rivals that still occupied the other half of the old galaxy, their might was great.

However, the Big Two could not afford to transfer too many warfleets to the new frontier. Many of them were still needed to guard the foundation of human space and prevent the other occupants of the old galaxy from making a comeback.

This was why the Big Two started to develop and build starships that were specifically designed to operate in the Red Ocean.

The Paracelsus Optimus was a warship that was especially developed to fulfill multiple roles at once. The ships of her class filled the MTA's need for a vessel that primarily focused on exploring and cleaning up remnant alien traces in recently-occupied territory.

Space was big and largely empty. It was too difficult for the Big Two to sweep up every single alien settlement or fleet as they expanded humanity's territory.

Normally, the job of getting rid of all of these mice that had fallen through the cracks was left to the pioneers that followed after the initial conquest.

It was a pity that not every pioneer was up to the task of defeating the alien remnants!

Stories spread every day about pioneering fleets suffering the bad luck of bumping into an angry phase whale or a remnant peulmer fleet and suffering the brunt of alien animosity towards the invaders from the Milky Way!

This was why the rearguard of the Big Two needed assets that could handle the more formidable threats that were far too powerful for most pioneers.

The Paracelsus Optimus was one of the many answers to this persistent problem. She was a new breed of warship that was not only developed with the Red Ocean's resources and mission requirements in mind, but also adhered to an MTA operational doctrine that sought to evolve or even reinvent the entire concept of starships as weapons of war!

It was no secret that the Mech Trade Association found it incredibly awkward to continue to rely on battleships as their top war weapons.

Although the mechers continually developed new technologies and design applications that constantly elevated mechs to a greater height, all of these innovations could not change the fact that mechs were miniscule compared to any warship!

This was why the MTA still employed battleships such as the Hessarian Bardine that largely resembled the ones utilized by the CFA.

The Paracelsus Optimus was an attempted break from this old and traditional style of designing warships.

While there were many good reasons while the old formula of battleships was still an enduring success, the MTA's shipwrights were not content with sticking to what already worked and were much more willing to buck tradition in order to create a better formula!

The important goal was to develop a new warship concept that specifically complemented the MTA's preferred approach towards combat and other missions.

The Paracelsus Optimus amply met those requirements.

As soon as she appeared through the portal created by the Simile Halifax, the so-called battlecarrier immediately brought her various functions to bear.

First, she activated her rich collection of sensor arrays, taking in not only the unstable tectonic activity happening on Auralis, but also collecting far more data about the rest of the star system!

The sensor and scanning systems of the Blinding Banshee couldn't even come close to matching their counterparts on the Paracelsus Optimus!

Even the small and relatively limited Simile Halifax was the equivalent to a blind mole in front of the excellent data-gathering abilities by the Paracelsus Optimus.

With her powerful processing banks, sophisticated AIs and thousands of dedicated sensor operators and data analysts, the Paracelsus Optimus only needed a couple of minutes to figure out more secrets and hidden details in the Garimel System than the Simile Halifax!

Information was power and the Paracelsus Optimus exemplified this phrase by possessing superior observation and analysis capabilities than many battleships!

With a clearer understanding of what might be going on in the Garimel System, the officers in charge did not hesitate to prepare the ship for combat against a major threat.

Her two formidable main turrets came online. One of them was able to fire energy beams that struck like stars while the other were able to fire gigantic kinetic rounds at relativistic speeds!

The triple-barreled weapon mounts were the battlecarrier's main guarantee against battleships and equivalent threats.

Of course, compared to actual battleships, the Paracelsus Optimos was rather lightly-armed for a 7-kilometer long warship.

The battlecarrier possessed a relatively modest array of other weapon systems to round out her direct combat capabilities.

Over 800 secondary turrets were interspersed around her hull.

While space peasants had to go through the convoluted process of building bunkers on their starships in order to provide them with basic self-defense capabilities, this rule didn't apply the MTA.

Despite their relatively small and compact sizes, the firepower of each secondary turret far exceeded that of a first-class bunker mech!

They were not discrete combat units but made up tiny parts of an enormous whole that was the battlecarrier. Heat and energy were fully shared while many other functions made sure they performed at their peak as much as possible.

With these guns, the Paracelsus Optimus was capable of tearing apart entire mech armies before they got close!

Of course, the modern MTA warship also possessed an array of missile launchers. With 1 grand missile launchers capable of unleashing some of the deadliest payloads of humanity and 40 large missile launchers that could fire an incredibly diverse amount of missile types, the battlecarrier made sure that it always had answers to many different problems.

The missile launchers were just a sideshow, though.

In fact, her ability to function as a battleship and a research vessel were both secondary to her primary function, which was to serve as a carrier for the MTA's proudest mechs!

Given the observations the Paracelsus Optimus had made along with the intelligence passed on by the Simile Halifax, the officers in charge decided to make a show of force and enter into battle with the full might of the battlecarrier's mech roster!

Her large contingent of mechs and mech pilots had already been put on standby before the vessel passed through the portal.

With the help of fast and precise launching systems, the mechs of the Paracelsus Optimus launched into space at a stupendous rate!

It took only a couple of minutes for 3000 mechs to enter space and form into organized mech units, all without colliding against each other!

Many mech units already received specific instructions that compelled them to move to different coordinates.

A lot of lighter and faster first-class multipurpose mechs spread out and utilized their limited warp travel capabilities to traverse a lot of distance in a short amount of time.

The tougher and heavier-looking machines did not move too far away. Instead, they assumed many different formations while positioning themselves around their mothership.

Back aboard the bridge of the Spirit of Bentheim, Ves zoomed in the live feed provided by the scout ship that was still in the process of speeding away from the cracking planet.

He was rather thankful that the new arrivals did not bother to jam or throw a lot of interference to obscure what they were doing. Perhaps the mechers felt that they didn't even need to bother with this precaution.

"These mechs..."

The visual feed showed the first-class multipurpose mechs of the MTA in their full glory.

Unlike their mothership's dark green color scheme with orange stripes, the mechs were coated in a variety of different styles that spoke of a high degree of individualization and customization at the mech company level.

A quick snapshot of the entire mech force already made it clear to Ves that it contained over a hundred different mech models!

"Interesting. They all look complicated, but I can still guess their overall role and emphasis."

First-class multipurpose mechs were generally thought of as omnimechs that could do everything and were equally good in every single mission.

This was an impossible ideal. Not even Star Designers succeeded in designing such a perfect, all-purpose mech.

The general approach to designing a first-class mech was to center them around a primary role and supplement it with a number of secondary roles.

The extra functionality provided by the latter were largely aimed at shoring up the first-class mech's most obvious shortcomings while also complimenting its main role.

A typical example of that in the mech lineup of the Paracelsus Optimus was a mech model that the IFF system denoted as the Interstellar Harpooner.

Ves quickly looked up this mech model on the galactic net. According to the MTA's brief database description, the Interstellar Harpooner was a mech specifically designed to fight against the phase whale race!

Made with materials that were highly stable and incredibly resistant against all manner of spatial fluctuations, this large and solid humanoid mech was not afraid of confronting the most powerful race of the Red Ocean!

As its name suggested, the Interstellar Harpooner was armed with an enormous launcher that was capable of launching special harpoons that could sink through some of the toughest phase whale hides.

One of the most annoying tactics of the phase whales was that they often utilized their spatial mastery to teleport away or speed up their flight to stay one step ahead of their opponents!

Harpooning these elusive phase whales was a simple but effective way of pinning these phase whales in place.

A single first-class multipurpose mech might not be able to trap a phase whale alone, but what about a hundred?

The Paracelsus Optimus most definitely prepared to fight against the phase whales seeing as they were one of the major threats of the new frontier.

The possibility of encountering a phase whale variant that was larger and more powerful than the ones the MTA had met so far did not diminish the battle intent of the mechers.

The Interstellar Harpooners all readied their main weapon to spear whatever phase whale might emerge from the increasingly more fractured Auralis!

If one harpoon wasn't enough, then they would fire another.

If two harpoons weren't enough, then they would fire more!

Despite the size, mass and other impressive properties of the harpoons, the mechs that were capable of launching weren't short of spares.

With the dimensional ammunition boxes attached to the underside of the launchers, each mech could fire up to 80 harpoons in total!

"These mechs are the nightmare of any phase whale!"

Chapter 3908 Flesh vs Metal

From the way the Paracelsus Optimus deployed her mechs, it was clear that the emphasis lay on the Interstellar Harpooners.

The mechs were not only armored with large and strong harpoon launchers, but also possessed an arsenal of energy weapons, stabilization modules and other features that allowed them to fight against phase whales as well as other threats in different ways.

Ves wasn't sure who designed the Interstellar Harpooners, but according to the public sources on the galactic net, they were most likely designed by Masters that excelled in spatial stability, gravitic stability and force neutralization.

Any mech could kill a phase whale as long as they were strong enough, but few of them could accomplish the more difficult feat of subduing and capturing a phase whale alive!

He frowned at this realization. "Is the MTA looking to capture whatever monster comes out of Auralis?"

This was a dangerous and risky course of action. Given how much effort the so-called Flesh Conqueror put into setting up the fish-whales, Ves thought that it was a bit too careless to aim for capturing the possible monstrosity that might come out after the Cerebral King brought the giant phase whale skeleton back to life!

Still, whatever happened, Ves and the rest of the Golden Skull Alliance were probably about to enjoy a good show.

Time continued to pass by as Auralis slowly began to shake like a rumbling engine. The heavy metal planet behaved as if it was constantly building up pressure.

If this pattern continued, the eventual explosion would definitely launch a lot of heavy rocks and other matter in every direction!

This was extremely dangerous for the Simile Halifax and the Paracelsus Optimus. Ves keenly noted that the two ships had come a bit closer to the unstable planet than he would have been comfortable with. What if a continent-sized landmass suddenly launched straight in their direction?

Even if the Paracelsus Optimus possessed enough defenses to withstand such an immense strike, her defenses would be sorely depleted after withstanding so much force!

"Who knows what the mechers are thinking."

To be honest, with everything that Ves had witnessed in recent days, he felt that a single battlecarrier might not be enough to address this threat. The phase whales were already known to be powerful, but their deviants and outliers were even more formidable!

The rumored clean whales were so far beyond the average phase whales that numerous alien archives described them as tyrants that dominated different eras of the Red Ocean!

Ves felt that the MTA was taking this potential galaxy-class threat far too lightly.

Just as he thought the mechers were waiting for Auralis to explode before taking action, the mechs that had flown close to the unstable planet took action at this time!

A number of mechs all launched odd-looking devices that steadily fell onto the surface of Auralis.

Once they made it to the surface, the devices drilled through the surface in order to fulfill an unknown purpose.

After that, the mechs surrounding Auralis grouped up and assumed defensive formations.

"It looks like the MTA is about to take action!"

After a short delay, the largest missile launcher on the Paracelsus Optimus suddenly fired a missile that triggered a lot of alarms as soon as the sensors caught glimpses of the massive object before it accelerated at an unreasonable rate!

"That's an anti-matter missile! The MTA is attempting to blow up Auralis in advance!"

This was actually a really clever move. Rather than allowing an alien to take the initiative by blowing up the planet on its terms, the mechers might as well preempt this move and try to ruin whatever was buried beneath the surface!

The missile was only visible for a short time before it zipped right towards Auralis!

Strangely enough, the immensely powerful missile did not explode upon contact with the soil but instead phased through it in a manner that reminded Ves of Lucky!

It only took seconds later for the missile to explode, though. The scout ship that observed what had happened detected an explosive release of energy from the interior Auralis!

The detonation not only accelerated Auralis' collapse, but also caused this process to go out of control!

Ves was both horrified and impressed by the sight.

It appeared that he would have to live with the fact that the MTA helped blow up one of the first planets that he had named!

The apocalyptic consequences of blowing up a heavy metal planet was difficult to describe.

A huge quantity of broken shards of land and rock flung away from the position of the former planet.

Their sizes varied as many were the size of mechs or a bit larger while a few were large enough to flatten several cities at once!

Strangely enough, none of the large and threatening chunks of rock came close to striking the MTA warships and the mechs that had deployed in space.

The smaller planet pieces that did come close to striking them were either blasted with various weapons or blocked by powerful energies.

Normally, mechs would have a very hard time blocking so much planetary debris.

Ves wouldn't have chosen to deploy the mechs in the open if he knew this would happen!

The mechs did not budge from their places, though.

What surprised him was that the machines did not entirely rely on their own inherent forms of defense to withstand the heavy rocks being flung in their direction!

Numerous different arrays on the hull of the Paracelsus Optimus lit up. Once they became sufficiently charged, they fired many different beams towards many different mech units!

The bright and powerful beams all struck distinctive-looking mechs of the same design!

Ves could see from their construction and their design that they were highly slanted towards defense and utility.

When these mechs captured the energy beams emitted by the Paracelsus Optimus, they suddenly projected huge energy shields that were large enough to cover a lot of mechs!

As soon as these large energy shields popped up around every mech formation, the planetary debris were no longer capable of shaking the mechs.

"Shield link technology!"

Shield link technology was one of the premier defensive methods of the Big Two. In this case, the Paracelsus Optimus essentially extended its extremely powerful energy shields to mechs that were ordinarily unable to sustain such a powerful defensive measure.

The mechs that were channeling all of the extended shields did not have to do any of the heavy lifting.

It was the battlecarrier that was doing most of the work!

The mechs were only needed to receive the shielding power from the Paracelsus Optimus and project them in the right places.

Through this measure, the 3000 MTA mechs easily withstood this calamity! Once most of the planetary debris had passed by the battlecarrier and her mechs, Ves curiously looked towards the coordinates occupied by the destroyed planet.

"What is that?"

A fleshy egg was left in place. The egg was relatively small compared to the planet but was definitely larger than a number of moons!

Right now, this egg was clearly damaged to a severe degree. There were a lot of bloody cuts and it looked as if the giant organic construct was experiencing difficulty with healing all of its injuries!

The egg did not sit around and do nothing, though. It jerkily began to move away the mechs even as it attempted to remedy its most grievous wounds.

"Is that... the phase whale version of a starship?"

This was odd as the phase whales generally relied on their bodies to traverse the stars!

The phase whales were all large when they reached adulthood and were already capable of warping towards other star systems as long as they absorbed a decent amount of phasewater. Given their natural talents, there was no reason for them to bother with building starships for themselves, especially since they needed to be as big as smaller moons like this fleshy egg!

As Ves continued to observe the fleshy egg, he began to grow suspicious. "This alien vessel is not ordinary, but... I bet its condition is not as great as it should now that the MTA blew up the planet early."

The MTA all opened fire on the alien construct. They employed a variety of weapons such as laser beams, physical projectiles, plasma bolts, missiles and more!

The surface of the fleshy egg was quite dense and resilient, but all of the cuts and open wounds made it a lot easier for the mechs to damage the alien construct.

The Paracelsus Optimus did not even bother to open fire with any of her weapon systems even though her firepower should be more than enough to crack open this fleshy orb!

"It would be more efficient to do so as well considering that this alien object is practically stationary." Ves surmised.

First-class mechs or not, the relatively small calibers of the weapons of all of the mechs made it difficult to destroy the fleshy egg in a short amount of time.

Several minutes passed as the gigantic object slowly began to rupture as its abused layers finally couldn't take it any longer!

The egg finally parted, revealing a liquid-filled interior with a single large organism resting in the center!

When Ves beheld the huge whale creature that was previously ensconced within the fleshy egg, he already had a good idea of its identity.

"Is it the Cerebral King or the Flesh Conqueror?"

The size and shape of this immense creature was a good match for the bones left behind in the Royal Tomb!

With a length of just over 12 kilometers, the super whale outmassed and outsized the Paracelsus Optimus!

The power exuding from its monstrosously large body made it easy for Ves and others to believe that it was a mythical clean or unclean whale.

However, Ves wasn't completely sure whether the Flesh Conqueror had truly come back to life due to how much of the Cerebral King its body had inherited.

The most distinctive trait was copying the rippling azure scales that previously covered the king fish's body. This indicated that the resurrected body inherited at least a portion of fish-whale physiology.

The similarities between the two confirmed that the rise of this super whale was definitely related to the Cerebral King!

The super whale's expression looked human enough to make it clear that it was really angry at the mechs and ships.

Still, despite its size and power, the enormous whale did not opt to retaliate against the human forces.

It instead attempted to leave this place!

Ves could already observe the characteristic distortion that indicated that the super whale was about to warp itself away.

Yet before the alien monster could make a quick getaway, the MTA mechs took action at this time!

The well-trained mech pilots of the Interstellar Harpooners had already been waiting to make their moves. The machines just happened to be positioned all around the super whale.

Once the mech pilots received their latest orders, the mechs all moved forward and launched their harpoons at the enormous super whale at the same time!

Spatial barriers and other exotic blocking mechanisms attempted to stop or divert these harpoons.

However, the projectiles they launched were not made of ordinary materials. The harpoons were not only incredibly hard, but also extremely resistant to spatial effects!

The harpoons practically pierced through every spatial barrier and other defenses like needles going through balloons.

Every single harpoon sunk deep into the flesh of the super whale!

The alien creature roared in pain as the harpoons dug into its body, making it difficult if not impossible for it to dislodge these stuck projectiles!

What was worse was that the sharp implements were all attached to energy cables that connected them to the Interstellar Harpooners that originally launched them all. This caused the super whale's body to be surrounded by different energy strings!

When the massive creature attempted to move away, most of the energy strings grew taut, causing the mechs connected to them to experience a huge dragging force.

Though Ves thought it was impossible for the Interstellar Harpooners to immobilize the super whale due to the immense difference in mass and power, what was strange was that the machines weren't as weak as he thought!

The Interstellar Harpooners all channeled a lot of power to a mysterious module that seemed to increase their mass and anchor their frames to their current positions.

With the help of these technological tricks, the mechs somehow gained the power to inhibit the movements of the super whale!

"This... this is amazing!"

Chapter 3909 Linking Technology

Ves felt as if he had gotten a glimpse of mech heaven.

Of all of the mechs developed by humanity, the ones designed and built by the MTA were unquestionably strong!

Although the first-class superstates could give the MTA a run for its money, the differences between the two were too big.

If the Greater Terran United Confederation and the New Rubarth Empire were back in their prime, then it may very well be possible for them to develop mechs that could compete against the ones fielded by the MTA.

However, this was the Age of Mechs, not the Age of Conquest. The glory days of the two super empires had long passed.

Not only did the Terrans and Rubarthans lose access to a lot of high-end resources, they also weren't allowed to utilize every form of technology mastered by the human race anymore.

The Big Two prohibited the use of a lot of powerful tech and taboo weapons, which meant that the first-class superstates could only develop mechs that were powerful up to a point.

As one of the two creators and enforcers of this rule, the MTA naturally gave itself an exemption. It could put anything it wanted in its own mechs!

The result was the appearance of mechs that better showcased the greater potential of this weapon platform.

The ones deployed against the super whale that had appeared from the fleshy egg showed a whole variety of tech and methods that Ves had never seen before except in highly-edited footage of battles that took place a long time ago.

Different from archival footage, the current live feed portrayed all of the powerful mechs in the open without any editing or censoring!

The fact that this battle was taking place at the same time and star system also made it a lot more exciting to Ves. He was directly involved in the events leading up to this collision!

"Damn, the MTA mechs are really giving the super whale a hard time!"

There were mechs that were armed with large positron cannons that unleashed a continuous stream of deadly particles that slowly burned and annihilated the enormous scales, hide and flesh of the super whale.

There were also mechs that fired deadly projectiles that not only caved in a decent amount of whale flesh, but also broke down into corrosive particles that poisoned and degraded the surrounding flesh!

There were also mechs that launched strange payloads that anchored into the open wounds of the super whale.

While these devices apparently did not deal any damage to the enormous beast, they generated a strong, localized energy field that disrupted the phasewater and spatial fluctuations in the vicinity!

These inhibitors visibly weakened the various means the super whale tried to employ in order to fend off its human attackers.

Just because the Paracelsus Optimus and her mech contingent were in the process of beating up the super whale did not mean the creature was defenseless.

As a possible clean whale that was larger and possibly more advanced than any other living phase whale, it had already started to activate a large number of powerful abilities!

Their power was so great that many of them could easily defeat the expeditionary fleet!

"This battle is on an entirely different scale from the Battle of Purgatory!"

The earlier engagement was relatively constrained. The fish-whales were not that powerful and the mechs fielded by the Golden Skull Alliance were way too weak compared to the machines of the MTA.

This was different. The super whale was no mere fish-whale. By virtue of its immense body and powerful organs, all of its abilities possessed the power to wipe out armies and cities!

For example, one of the deadlier means of attack was breaking space to the point where an enormous spatial tear appeared that could split anything in half.

The spatial barriers summoned by the super whale were also as tough if not tougher than the energy shield deployed by the Paracelsus Optimus!

It was a pity that the super whale didn't even have an opportunity to show its full strength.

The harpoons along with the spatial inhibition devices that the MTA mechs sunk into the whale monster's massive body already crippled much of the super whale's spatial abilities!

It didn't matter how much phasewater it stored in its body or how much energy it was able to channel through its organs.

Any ability related to spatial manipulation automatically weakened before it took effect!

Even if a warp effect or spatial storm struck the mechs circling around the giant whale, the energy shields and inhibition fields provided by numerous auxiliary mechs negated the deadliness of these attacks even further!

If the spatial attacks had any power left after all of these rounds of weakening, then the extraordinarily resilient first-class multipurpose mechs could easily withstand the damage!

For a moment, Ves felt sorry for the creature that only had a short moment to enjoy its entry into the main reality.

"This super whale must feel incredibly miserable for fighting against the wrong opponent."

It was hard for the super whale to deal any effective damage against all of the MTA mechs. With the Interstellar Harpooners continuing to anchor and pin the enormous body down, the creature could not even leave without destroying these annoying first, but how could it do so when its main forms of attack were all weakened by successive measures?

The coordination and the various means utilized against the super whale already told Ves that this wasn't the first time the Paracelsus Optimus hunted down a phase whale!

Granted, the battlecarrier and her mech contingent probably never fought against a whale that was this big and powerful, but their specs were so high that not even a resurrected whale tyrant could overcome their resistance!

The only upside was that the 3000 MTA mechs still weren't strong enough to quickly go through all of the flesh that covered the more crucial parts of its body. It would take a long time for the machines to overcome all of this natural protection even if they concentrated their efforts.

Seeing that the mechs had already crippled its vaunted spatial attacks, the super whale eventually put down its pride and gave up on relying on them to free itself from its predicament.

"The whale is beginning to get serious!"

The super whale slowly opened up its enormous mouth and began to unleash an energy spray that looked highly familiar to Ves and the rest.

The energy spray unleashed by the super whale was powerful enough to burn an entire continent!

It was so energetic that it blinded the sensors of the scout ship in an instant, forcing the crew to make adjustments.

When the live feed went back to normal, Ves was able to see the aftermath of this powerful outburst.

"The mechs... are still intact!"

None of the MTA mechs suffered any damage from the super whale's attack!

The same shield link technology that was responsible for extending the energy shields of the Paracelsus Optimus to the various mech units had kept them all safe and sound!

Although the battlecarrier incurred a moderate hit to her reserves, this level of consumption was well within her tolerance.

The super whale did not give up, though. The creature's body was so huge that it possessed a lot of different attack methods.

In one instance, it grew out a kilometers-long bone spike from its spine and launched it at a cluster of mechs!

The gigantic kinetic projectile launched forth with the power to trigger an extinction on a life-bearing planet, yet the same energy shields generated with the help of shield link technology kept all of the MTA mechs undamaged!

The same happened when the super whale tried to be more creative. Its enormous surface shook and bubbled as fish-whale after fish-whale spontaneously formed from its flesh and subsequently launched themselves at the surrounding mechs!

Since the fish-whales had separated themselves from the main body, their spatial abilities were no longer inhibited to the same degree.

This allowed them to accelerate forward by warping the space around their own bodies and launching all kinds of attacks on the mechs.

However, not even this clever measure was able to shake the defenses provided by the battlecarrier.

The fish-whales were nowhere near as strong as their source, so the mechs quickly shredded them down before they could do anymore damage.

As the super whale continued to launch different forms of attack, the mechs began to get more serious as well!

The most obvious sign of this was when the mechs took their linking capabilities to the next level!

Ves became amazed when he saw that the mechs and battlecarrier began to form multiple different kinds of linkages.

They formed data links that completely pooled the data and the processing power of the mechs and battlecarrier.

Mechs were no longer limited in their ability to analyze their opponents and the environment by relying on their own software, sensor systems and processing capabilities.

By pooling these capabilities together with other mechs as well as borrowing a portion of the enormous capabilities of their mothership, the MTA mechs gained a huge boost in analysis and threat assessment!

As a consequence, the mech pilots knew exactly where to attack, which weapons they should employ and so on. The support provided by abundant data allowed each of the affected mechs to fight a lot more effectively than before!

"What's even more perverse is the energy link technology."

The MTA used this function a bit more sparingly because the demands on the mechs were higher.

Nonetheless, Ves noted that specific first-class multipurpose mechs with high demand for energy all possessed receiver arrays that could directly receive the energy streams beamed by the Paracelsus Optimus.

With such an abundant power source available to them, the mechs in question did not have to worry about running out of juice at all as they fired their power-hungry weapons!

Although these mechs were slightly constrained by the huge amount of waste heat generated by their systems, the MTA had done their best to mitigate this by making use of dimensional heatsinks as well as highly efficient parts.

The use of data link, shield link and energy link technologies essentially endowed all of the compatible and affected mechs with the powerful performance parameters of the Paracelsus Optimus.

The super whale wasn't necessarily fighting against a lot of mechs.

It was actually fighting against the Paracelsus Optimus! The 3000 mechs deployed by the battlecarrier were an extension of herself rather than independent weapon platforms.

Ves was absolutely fascinated by this combined approach to mech combat!

Although it was not as effective and efficient as relying on ordinary warship-grade weapons to defeat powerful opponents, it was still a method that solved many of the shortcomings of mechs!

The most prevalent criticisms of mechs as a weapon system was that their limited size and scale made them too weak and too fragile to fight against the most formidable enemies of human civilization.

Given that a single battlecarrier succeeded in suppressing a powerful alien entity that was possibly the Flesh Conqueror reborn, Ves could readily conclude that the MTA had already made great strides in addressing these long-standing weaknesses!

"It's still a form of cheating, though."

Though the kid inside Ves was really enthusiastic about the effectiveness of linking technology, his mech designer side was more skeptical.

"The tech is too advanced for second-class mechs."

The high technology was not only too complicated and expensive for the current Larkinson Clan, it also happened to be taboo!

When Ves quickly searched for more information about linking technology on the galactic net, he immediately learned that most forms of linking technology were prohibited by the MTA.

His face quickly turned sour.

"Data linking is still okay, but shield linking and energy linking is apparently a step too far for space peasants."

The reason why this was the case was that the latter forms of linking essentially allowed mechs to possess destructive potential that far exceeded what they should possess.

Linking a ranged mech with the energy output of a starship was no different from plugging it into the power network of the same vessel!

If these measures became widespread, then ranged mechs would quickly obtain the power to inflict mass destruction!

Since this was what the MTA expressly tried to prevent, the organization prohibited both forms of linking, which meant that Ves and the Larkinsons wouldn't be able to use these handy features anytime soon.

"A pity..."

It was so painful to see the MTA making great use of linking technology in front of his eyes but not being able to use the same means himself!

As Ves lamented the MTA's restrictive regulations once again, he suddenly paused.

"Wait a minute... haven't I developed my own forms of linking technology already?"

Chapter 3910 Bargaining Chips

In the battle between human machines and a terrible whale monstrosity, the latter never gained an opportunity to gain an advantage!

From the beginning, the Paracelsus Optimus and her contingent of top mechs utilized a combination of powerful tech and deep familiarity with the combat methods of phase whales to suppress the revived super whale.

No matter whether the whale was the completely transformed Cerebral King or the notorious second coming of the Flesh Conqueror, hardly any titanic being would be able to contend against the might of the MTA!

The people of the expeditionary fleet all become profoundly affected by the sight of the MTA's strong and cutting-edge battle methods.

Many Larkinsons, Glory Seekers and Crossers worked with mechs day in and day out. Every mech pilot, mech technician, mech designer and mech fabricator handled a lot of different mechs over the course of their careers.

They were all proud of the second-class mechs they came in touch with. A few models even impressed them. The Larkinson Clan in particular had a lot of excellent mechs that captured their imagination such as the Valkyrie Redeemer or the Everchanger.

Yet compared to the MTA mech models such as the Interstellar Harpooner that could inhibit the movement of the largest phase whale to have ever existed in the Red Ocean, the mechs of the Larkinson Clan looked like toys!

So what if the Valkyrie line could inspire death? So what if the Everchanger could project a million different glows? All of these gimmicks would not be able to shake an enemy force at the height of the MTA units fighting in the Garimel System at the moment!

Ves had always known there was a huge gap in strength and capabilities between his own forces and that of the Big Two.

As a mech designer, he could easily imagine the differences in his head or perform more objective comparisons by performing a lot of calculations, but these means were rather abstract, so they did not hit home as much.

This was different. Nothing about the ongoing battle was theoretical. Against a huge super whale that could easily smash apart the entirety of the Golden Skull Alliance by relying on brute force alone, the MTA easily contained the threat!

"We still have much to go before we can catch up to the best." Ves sighed.

He felt both humbled and hopeful. One day, his mechs would be able to reach or even exceed the might of the MTA. He was certain that he would get there sooner or later as long as he continued to work hard and expand his horizons.

What was more important was that his efforts in the coming decades and centuries would determine how long it would take for him to close the gap.

He didn't want to take too long to become a Master Mech Designer or Star Designer. He was fed up with getting caught up in major events that involved massive interests without having any leverage to stand up for himself!

While Ves managed to lower his head to the MTA Survivalist Faction and obtained their backing in exchange for concessions, this was not a long-term solution.

"If I want to have the right to speak, I need to be able to design mechs that exceed the ones fighting against the super whale!"

This was an extremely ambitious goal. The mechs in the fight were all based on powerful models designed by numerous excellent Masters.

They weren't only powerful because the designers utilized the most expensive materials. They also utilized their own design abilities to implement fantastic solutions based on mature and proven design philosophies.

The gap was too big!

"I need to learn how to design first-class mechs before I can set my sights any higher."

Ves no longer thought about achieving his ambitions in a single leap and went back to earnestly observing the MTA's combat methods.

"Their linking technology is too strong."

The more he looked at how the mechs were able to share resources among themselves and their mothership, the more he recognized it as a great approach for the MTA to compete against the CFA!

Compared to large and brutish battleships, mechs were a lot more flexible and versatile.

Of course, the downsides of mechs were also serious, but many of these awful shortcomings no longer became a hindrance as long as shield links and energy links came into the picture!

"Why hasn't the MTA standardized and propagated this tech as of yet if it's so strong?" Ves wondered.

He could understand why the mechs were so reluctant to hand too much power to space peasants, but he hadn't seen the MTA employ this specific tech in many battles.

"Perhaps... it's not mature yet. It's too new and it still has several major flaws."

Once Ves got over his wonder of linking technology, he understood that there were several major problems.

First, these shield links could only be propagated through straight beams.

As long as an enemy knew how they worked and had time to prepare, it was not impossible to block or distort the trajectories of these beams!

In fact, the inability of these linking beams to reach targets that were outside of the line of sight of their projectors heavily limited their usability.

It would be too hard for a starship in orbit to provide linking support to a mech that was fighting indoors or underground!

Second, only specific mechs that were built with linking technology in mind were able to receive external boosts.

Given that the MTA did not choose to implement the modules that were able to receive or transmit the linking beams, adding this functionality to mechs evidently imposed a major cost.

As long as an enemy force specifically targeted these linking mechs first, it became a lot harder to amplify the performance of an entire unit!

Third, the biggest source of strength to the mechs in the field was the 7-kilometer long battle carrier that was not too far away from the thick of the battle.

The range of the linking beams was evidently limited or else the Paracelsus Optimus wouldn't have moved so close to the fighting.

"Despite all of these flaws, the effect is still strong!"

As long as it enabled mechs to wield power far behind what their own frames could provide, it was worth it! The tech had already proven its potential. The specialists working on it just had to develop it more in order to make it more mature for widespread adoption.

Ves looked thoughtful. "If the rumors about the CFA granting pioneers limited permission to field warships are true, then releasing linking technology might be the MTA's response to that. The last thing the mechers want to see is everyone downsizing their mech forces so they can play with much more powerful warships instead."

The MTA was filled with smart people, so it definitely developed numerous answers against the challenges of its archrival!

These games were too far away from Ves, and given the high demands of linking technology, it was probably too impractical to apply them to second-class mechs.

However, what if he came up with his own spin on linking technology?

As the MTA continued to leverage the advantages of different links, Ves became more and more inspired by their effectiveness.

Didn't Ves already implement his own form of 'links'?

Through the implementation of design spirits, battle formations and spiritual networks, he had already created new forms of linkages that essentially allowed mechs and mech pilots to derive strength outside of what they possessed by themselves!

The ubiquitous design spirits that Ves easily added to all of his mech designs already granted each of his mechs a portion of the strength and influence of powerful entities.

The Valkyrie Redeemer would never have been so celebrated if it was not linked to the Superior Mother!

His other spiritual solutions such as battle formations were more expanded implementations of spiritual linkages. He just called them spiritual connections or spiritual bonds in his mind.

No matter how he labeled these spiritual implementations, it did not change the fact that they shared many parallels to the linking technology employed by the MTA!

Ves slowly grinned. "The biggest difference between the two is that my own set of solutions are all recent innovations."

Combined with the fact that they were purely spiritual in nature, many of his powerful solutions had fallen through the cracks of the MTA's rules!

From a strict perspective, a design application as destructive and powerful as battle formations should have been prohibited by the MTA.

However, since battle formations were too new, Ves believed that the current rules that never took such possibilities into account did not prohibit them in particular!

What made battle formations as well as his other spiritual formations even more difficult to regulate was that they were all immaterial by nature!

It was a lot harder to regulate technology when they only existed in a spiritual form that the vast majority of people could not perceive or touch.

As long as Ves and his clan did not go overboard when utilizing battle formations and such, he believed that the MTA would be willing to maintain a blind eye to them at the very least. After all, the mechers were probably eager to master these new forms of linking and power sharing as well!

He gained a bit more confidence after this realization. He was not a hapless Apprentice anymore who had no chips to bargain with. Although he was only a Journeyman for now, his most successful design solutions already had the potential to change the way that humanity made use of mechs!

This granted Ves with at least a bit of leverage!

Some bigshot from the MTA would definitely summon Ves for a meeting once this entire incident had passed.

He could already guess that whatever happened next would have a profound influence on the trajectory of his life as well as his relationship with the MTA.

Given all of the drastic changes that were in store, Ves needed as much leverage as possible to get closer to his desired outcome!

"The Mech Trade Association isn't easy to deal with at all." He grimaced.

As if emphasizing this point, the MTA force fighting against the super whale suddenly changed their approach.

Up until now, the 3000 mechs along with the support from their battlecarrier succeeded in suppressing the super whale.

That didn't mean they were able to defeat the super whale, though. The enormous monster seemed to possess an endless amount of energy.

After figuring out that the mechs wanted to whittle it down over time, the super whale directed much of its energy to regenerating its wounds!

As an organic super monster, how could the creature lack a means to heal its own wounds?

By making use of the formidable regeneration power of its highly developed body, the super whale easily healed all of the cuts, burns and missing bits of flesh inflicted by the mechs.

This instantly added another dimension to the battle!

If the Paracelsus Optimus and her mech contingent weren't able to make their damage stick, then this one-sided engagement would gradually turn into a battle of attrition.

This was not good news for the mechers!

"They need to bring out the big guns if they want to defeat the super whale."

What will the commanding officers decide?

The most obvious answer was to set the mechs aside and allow the Paracelsus Optimus to pound the super whale with her formidable primary armament.

There was no way the super whale could endure the full power of those formidable-looking warship turrets!

Yet Ves did not think the MTA was prepared to take this course of action. The mechers already put a lot of effort into employing their mechs in a fight that was not entirely in their favor. Resorting to the CFA's favorite means would be a form of ideological defeat that would cast a large shadow in the hearts of many supporters of mechs.

No, if the commanding officers wanted to obtain a beautiful win, then they needed to present an answer that fully aligned with the goals and aspirations of the Mech Trade Association!

A minute later, that answer finally appeared on the battlefield.

One additional mech launched from the Paracelsus Optimus and quickly blasted towards the super whale.

As the mech continued to accelerate forward, a distinctive corona took shape around its frame.

Then, this corona expanded. So much power radiated from the mech that Ves and many other observers widened their eyes.

They recognized this phenomenon!

"Ace mech!"