

Mech 4091

Chapter 4091 Divine Marker

Gloriana spent weeks developing her new concept.

In order to design and make an expert mech that could become the beginnings of a god body, she took advantage of the Larkinson Clan's intimacy with numerous proto-gods.

What better way to understand gods and how to make them in the form of mechs than to receive assistance from the real thing?

Not just Helena, but numerous other proto-gods also pitched in to help her achieve her ambitious goal.

Design spirits such as Qilanxo and Goldie pitched in as well and granted Gloriana the theoretical understanding she needed to complete her new method.

More importantly, Bravo also cooperated with her in various ways. The design spirit was more invested in Gloriana's endeavor than others because the C-Man would become a lot stronger if she succeeded.

Although not all of the design spirits were as easy to communicate with as Helena, Gloriana was able to make do. Sometimes she made use of Alexandria's design network in order to communicate and convey meaning on a more direct level.

Gloriana made rapid progress every day. Her passion ran high as she overcame one challenge after another and came one step closer to completing her new method and approach for high-ranking mech designs.

One of the more difficult and challenging requirements of realizing a god body was to develop a mechanism that enabled its physical form to evolve and transcend on its own.

Gloriana did not especially aim to strengthen the intangible half of a living mech. That was her husband's specialty. It was doubtful that she could do any better, and even if she did, their work would overlap too much to produce much synergy.

In order to avoid stepping on Ves' toes, Gloriana primarily focused her attention on developing a mechanism that relied on extraordinary processes to transform a mech's physical structure into a god body.

She knew that it was already possible for metaphysical phenomena to strengthen products in a physical manner.

For example, masterwork mechs!

An incredibly daring and radical notion suddenly came across her mind.

"What if... my god body concept gradually allow my mechs to transform into masterwork mechs and beyond on their own? What if it is no longer necessary to get everything right from the start?"

Gloriana was completely shocked by this bold and daring notion.

If anyone else heard what she had just imagined, then they would definitely call her crazy!

Masterwork mechs were rare and special exactly because the conditions to make them were so harsh. Mech designers and fabricators could spend their entire lives chasing after them but never succeed because they fell short or never attained the luck necessary for their works to reach beyond the mundane.

However, who was Gloriana? She was a six-fold masterwork mech designer!

Not only that, she attained this status while she was still a Journeyman in her thirties!

She wasn't as old and set in her ways as other masterwork mech designers. She might not be as knowledgeable and experienced as her older peers, but she was far more flexible and open to subversive and counterintuitive ideas as a result!

The notion of designing and making an expert mech that could automatically transform into a masterwork mech and perhaps even a grand mech did not sound ludicrous in her opinion!

This was because she became increasingly more certain that she could establish such a mechanism!

"Even if I can't do it yet as a Journeyman, I will surely be able to make it happen in the future!"

This was her conviction as a mech designer! Just because other people could not accomplish this goal did not mean that Gloriana was unable to make any progress.

It was better to try and see if she could make anything happen. Even if her initial attempts failed to achieve her intended purpose, she would still be able to learn from the experience and produce a better result in the future.

As Gloriana fleshed out her new method, she soon began to think about how she could turn a physical mech into a more effective and efficient receiver of divine energy.

"We are gods because when people direct their worship towards us, we can capture what they freely offer to us." Helena explained to Gloriana during a design session.

"I understand that, Helena, but how can this connection take shape? How can people direct their worship to the right subject? There are many people who are called Helena in human space. There are many gods who bear this name as well. What ensures that they do not worship the wrong death goddess?"

The self-proclaimed Daughter of Death scrunched her intangible face. "Those are really difficult questions, Gloriana. You're asking questions about matters that are completely natural and instinctive towards my kind. My head is already starting to ache. If you weren't my brother's sweetheart, I would never cooperate with you on your quest."

Fortunately, the two were related, so Helena was still open to cooperation.

After a brief discussion, Gloriana finally learned what she needed to know.

"So each god is a unique existence that possesses its own marker. This marker is what identifies you and makes sure that whenever people think of you, they will reach out to the correct subject. It is much like an address in that sense."

"Yes."

"Then what I need to add to my next mech is simple. I will have to design and place a unique 'divine marker' to my mech so that it can gain one of the most essential functions of a god body!"

Gloriana's idea was rather simple. Since gods sustained their existence with the help of unique markers, she wanted to create an artificial version onto a mech that she had already primed to behave like a god in physical form.

The addition of a divine marker might be the catalyst that her upcoming mech design needed in order to make her idea come to life!

It was like setting up a person to become a king but not being able to bestow the legitimacy of one. In history, such false kings were known as pretenders, and they rarely succeeded in becoming true monarchs.

What Gloriana attempted to accomplish was to set up a pretender king but also put a crown on his head.

The addition of a crown might not single-handedly turn a pretender into the real deal, but it made the false king look more dignified.

As long as the crown bearer kept convincing more and more people to acknowledge him as the only true king, the pretender may ultimately receive enough recognition to turn falsehood into truth!

This was exactly the sort of dynamic that she was aiming to achieve with the C-Man!

She might be aiming to produce a mech that matched the description of a god body, but she knew quite well that she was probably unable to make one right from the start.

This was not necessarily a hindrance, because she took a page from Ves' book and intended to create a seed at first. A god body seed!

"The power of growth can be used to strengthen many existences. Why shouldn't it apply to a god body?"

Gloriana combined everything she had learned and come up with for the past week into a complicated implementation that required a lot of additional design work and problem solving.

One particularly difficult challenge was to make a valid divine marker. It turned out that while it was easy to make an intangible marker, it was a lot harder to translate it into a physical form.

When she conducted a few experiments by making trinkets that were similar to totems, she realized that placing a single divine marker on a mech would not be enough.

"If I place a single divine marker onto an armor plate of a mech, any effects will likely remain contained within this component."

Whether this was because her implementation of a divine marker was too flawed and rudimentary or because the entire concept was insufficient, Gloriana couldn't tell.

She did not let this problem hinder her efforts for long.

"If one divine marker isn't enough, then I'll add two. If two divine markers are not enough, then I'll add four!"

She initially thought about spreading a dozen or so across the frame of her mech, but then came up with a notion that was even more extreme.

"What if I add a divine marker to every single component?"

According to her theoretical framework, there should be no rule that prohibited this action. Instead, it might facilitate the transformation of a mech into a god body because a mech would carry a lot more receivers than normal!

Gloriana quickly adjusted her mech design and added the unique marker she developed of the C-Man onto every single mech part.

Every armor plate, every structural component, every pipe, every wire and every single nut and bolt bore the exact same symbol!

It was as if Gloriana took a stamp and pressed it on every single part in order to mark their ownership!

While this action minutely affected the parameters of her mech, Gloriana convinced herself that this was a necessary sacrifice to achieve perfection.

"This isn't enough." She said as she had finished with marking every part that she could control. "There is one major part about my mech that has remained untouched."

That was the TESMAS that was supposed to be one of the killer functions of the C-Man design.

She corresponded with Professor Neihy Almar on a regular basis in order to make sure that the custom version of this product would specifically complement the C-Man's strengths and weaknesses.

However, Gloriana did not know how well the professor would take her next request.

When the mech designer finally mustered up the courage to pass on her latest demand, she received a skeptical reaction.

"Out of all of the additions and alterations that you have requested, this is by far the most inexplicable of them." Professor Almar's projection replied. "You at least provided sound theoretical arguments to justify the prior changes to the TESMAS that I am developing for your expert mech. This is completely different. It will not improve the performance of my nanomachines at all. In fact, the change will detract from it because you are adding unnecessary elements to their design. The impact will not be light because my nanomachines are so small that the addition of a symbol of this complexity will substantially change the structure of a nanomachine. I will have to conduct many tests and perform many simulations in order to reoptimize the altered design."

Gloriana directed a pleading expression at the older woman. "Please do so, ma'am. I am certain that this addition will further my ultimate purpose. It is difficult for me to explain why this is the case, but I am confident enough in my ideas that I am more than willing to make this attempt."

Professor Almar remained impassive. "Very well. I will respect your clan's identity as a shareholder of my development company and will faithfully attempt to implement your request. You are not the first mech designer who has made unusual demands. I will tell you what I have told others and remind you that you are ultimately responsible for the outcome. Whether your experiment works or not is not my job. I am only obliged to deliver the product that you have specified, nothing more and nothing less."

"I understand, professor. I will not hold you to account for my own failings."

Gloriana recognized that she was essentially making a costly bet. If her theories and assumptions were correct and if her actual implementation was good enough, then the C-Man would definitely become an expert mech that could set a new standard in the Larkinson Clan!

If her ideas failed to deliver on their promises, then she would have made an extremely costly error that left the Larkinson Clan stuck with an expert mech that performed substantially below expectations.

Yet despite this cloud hanging over her head, Gloriana was absolutely convinced that she was able to realize her very first god body with this design project!

Chapter 4092 First-Class Fabrication Equipment

Months of focused work and effort culminated in the completion of the C-Man Project.

Ves, Gloriana, Sara and Tifi had all worked intermittently on the ambitious expert brawler mech design. Each of them applied their specialties to make it stronger and more distinct compared to the previous expert mechs designed for the Larkinson Clan.

Gloriana played an especially big role in the design project as she applied numerous radical new solutions to the mech design. Whether her unusual theories could bear fruit remained to be seen, but she did not regret her ambitious design choices.

Professor Benedict Cortez also lent a hand by taking care of the aspects of the C-Man design that were more specific to expert mechs.

The older man spent time with Venerable Vincent in order to identify matching resonating materials.

Once they formed a list of compatible resonating exotics and alloys, Professor Benedict consulted with the other participating mech designers to settle on special material that should hopefully give the C-Man a way to utilize the power of true resonance.

The good news was that the Larkinsons already possessed the key material. It turned out that Vincent was able to generate a notable reaction from one of the 47 resonating exotics that the Larkinsons managed to excavate from the Garimel System.

The clan had already submitted samples to the mechers who subsequently figured out the essential properties of the newly-discovered material.

Marneium was a resonating exotic that could actively absorb heat and convert it into electrical energy.

While it did not generate that much output when left alone, as long as a compatible expert pilot resonated with it, the substance could generate a formidable amount of energy by absorbing the surrounding heat.

This was the perfect resonating exotic for a ranged mech or an energy-intensive mech!

It would have been great if Venerable Vincent stuck to the initial idea of piloting a hybrid mech armed with energy weapons, but Marneium was not a bad choice for the current configuration of the C-Man.

Compared to other expert melee mechs such as the Riot and the First Sword, the C-Man had the potential to drain its energy reserves a lot faster.

Aside from carrying a backup shield generator that could be quite burdensome to maintain at full power, the C-Man's main form of defense was an active system that could expend a huge amount of energy in a short amount of time!

TESMAS was capable of turning the C-Man into an overwhelmingly tough and powerful battle machine in the right conditions.

However, the smart armor system's terrible energy consumption at full power meant that Vincent would barely be able to win a single fight before needing to replenish its depleted energy cells!

This was a major inconvenience and only limited the C-Man to short bursts of intensive combat against tougher opponents.

Marneium offered a potential solution to this shortcoming. As long as it was able to absorb the waste heat generated by the mech along with thermal energy obtained from other sources such as incoming energy attacks, the active boost could drastically extend the C-Man's operation time even while it was engaged in heavy fighting!

Of course, all of this did not come for free. Venerable Vincent bore most of the burden maintaining the Heat Conversion resonating ability.

At this early stage, Gloriana doubted that Vincent could maintain this state for long. However, as long as he continued to develop as an expert pilot, his resonance strength and other extraordinary properties would gradually become more formidable, thereby reducing the burden of resonating with Marneium.

Perhaps a time might come in the future where Venerable Vincent would be able to maintain the Heat Conversion resonating ability for the entire duration of a battle, thereby effectively making it far tougher than other expert mechs!

She quietly sighed as she studied the final iteration of her expert mech design. "It would have been even better if it could fit another key material."

It was difficult to justify the addition. TESMAS already stole the show by being so powerful and demanding. Much of the capacity of the C-Man design had to be allocated to energy cells and other elements to support this demanding system.

As such, the cost of adding an additional key resonating material became too high. The C-Man already had to incorporate other, more generic resonating materials in order to be able to generate a resonance shield and such.

While Gloriana wasn't fond of this choice, she didn't think the absence of a second key resonating exotic would drastically reduce the combat effectiveness of her expert mech design.

"TESMAS is so strong on the onset that it can exceed any regular resonance ability in performance!"

By borrowing the remarkable properties of phasewater, it could achieve a peak strengthening effect of up to 1200 percent!

That wasn't all. If Gloriana's goals came true, then the C-Man and all of its physical parts including the nanomachines that made up TESMAS might become even stronger. This could radically increase the hardness of the C-Man's outer frame and allow it to withstand even more damage!

"Perhaps the C-Man might be able to resist more damage than the Shield of Samar if it grows strong enough!"

Of course, Venerable Jannzi and the Shield of Samar were doing their best to prevent such an outcome.

Jannzi enjoyed a formidable head start over Venerable Vincent and possessed the fastest growth rate among all of the active Larkinson expert pilots.

The Shield of Samar constantly benefited from Jannzi's growth and was also due for an upgrade. Her outdated parts and systems needed to be renewed with more advanced versions to make sure that the living mech maintained the status of the toughest machine of the Larkinson Clan.

In effect, the planned upgrade was nothing more than an attempt to bring up the tech and sophistication of the older expert mech so that it no longer fell behind to newer expert mechs such as the Minerva and the C-Man.

However, that was a consideration for another day. At this time, Gloriana needed to dedicate all of her attention to her impending fabrication run.

She along with Ves, Sara and Tifi had all convened in the secure workshop room inside the Genesis Lab.

There was no meaningful way for them to improve the design any further. The powerful new upgrades to the Design Department's processing power and supercomputing capabilities had substantially increased the efficiency of the optimization process.

The technical refinement of the C-Man design had already reached a satisfactory level. While it would be even better if they could spend a few more months on finetuning its design even more, Gloriana still had to finish her work on the Blade Chaser Mark II and the Mars Project.

"Mama, what is that?"

"That is a superfab, honey."

"What is a superfab?"

"That is a really big machine that we use to make our mech. Mama and papa are about to use it to make a powerful new mech."

"Wooo...." Aurelia looked impressed.

"I need you to be a good girl and let us work uninterrupted, okay? Lucky, Clixie and Shannon will keep you company if you need it. We have made sure to bring plenty of toys to keep you busy!"

"What if I want you, mama?"

"Mama and papa will take regular breaks. Don't worry, Aurelia. We won't stay away for long."

Gloriana rubbed her growing belly as she said that. Now that her pregnancy with her second child had caused her to develop a sizable bump, she needed to take more breaks in order to preserve her health and the health of her next daughter.

"Before I go, would you like to join me in showing our devotion to the Superior Mother?"

"Are we going to see grandma?"

"In a way. Come with me, honey."

Gloriana brought her daughter to the shrine dedicated to the Superior Mother. She knelt in front of it and guided Aurelia into doing the same.

Once she had finished her ritual, Gloriana felt a lot more certain about her upcoming attempt.

She brought Aurelia back to Shannon before joining the other mech designers.

The Journeymen all stood before the highly advanced AP-VEX superfab that the Larkinson Clan acquired more than half a year ago. It was part of a larger suite of advanced first-class production equipment.

With all of this high-quality gear at their disposal, it was a lot easier and faster to fabricate high-quality mechs!

Gloriana did not need to ask whether Ves and the others were ready to make use of the new gear. They had all used the production equipment before or practiced with them in preparation for this fabrication run.

The only significantly different deviation from their normal approach was the fact that they had already prepared their batch of TESMAS beforehand.

She turned towards a secure storage crate that safely and securely stored the extremely expensive batch of nanomachines.

Just transporting it to the Cat Nest was a miniature ordeal in itself. After integrating over 5 kilograms of phasewater, the customized version of TESMAS was probably one of the most expensive technological products on the planet in private hands!

Gloriana and her husband had already examined the nanomachines to verify whether they were sound and made according to their specifications.

"Everything is ready." Ves confirmed. "Every material is in place. We are not short on anything. We can start as soon as possible."

"Understood. This fabrication run will take about three days. Hopefully we will be able to make Venerable Vincent happy."

The expert pilot had already arrived along with his pregnant wife. Vincent already looked stoked to see his first expert mech come to fruition.

He could finally pilot a mech that was capable of keeping up with his growing strength!

Previously, it took at least a week to fabricate an expert mech. The reason why they were able to cut this time was because the AP-VEX superfab along with the other first-class workshop equipment were able to perform the same production tasks a lot faster.

Another reason why they were able to reduce the time was because they were able to skip the time-consuming step of fabricating and assembling the armor system of the C-Man.

In fact, if they were willing to rush the fabrication process, they could probably deliver a complete expert mech within 48 hours.

However, Gloriana wanted everyone to take their time and make sure they worked as thoroughly as possible. Working for three days straight was not as cumbersome as seven or eight days.

After the mech designers studied and confirmed their work schedule one last time, Gloriana initiated the first step.

"Alexandria."

Maow!

An arrogant-looking red cat emerged from Gloriana's mind. The cat imperiously looked down on everyone else, though she pointedly did not direct her gaze at Lucky and Clixie.

"Connect!"

Maow maow!

The cat extended numerous spiritual bonds to the participating mech designers as well as Venerable Vincent.

Everyone's mind became more connected and in sync with each other. Gloriana, Ves and Sara Voiken were already familiar with this remarkable state, but this was Tifi Coslone and Venerable Vincent's first experience with the design network!

It was quite interesting to feel their awe and surprise at the design network. Tifi already became engrossed by the design philosophies and perspectives of her fellow mech designers.

Vincent became completely lost by all of the science and engineering that filled everyone else's minds.

In turn, the mech designers all became familiar with how Vincent approached reality and thought about himself.

It didn't surprise Gloriana at all at how much the expert pilot was absorbed with admiring himself. His thoughts were so masculine that Gloriana was unable to hide her contempt!

However, that did not stop her from using what she learned from Vincent to guide her in her fabrication work.

Vincent might be childish in certain aspects, but he was also a brave and inspiring warrior.

Gloriana aimed to maximize these positive traits and transform the former Brighter into a hero that was larger than life!

The C-Man was the key to Vincent's ascension!

Chapter 4093 Smooth Fabrication

"Hihihi! Lucky, stay still. Come wear this!"

"Meoooooww!"

Lucky scrambled away but Clixie pounced on his metal form and held the gem cat in place long enough for an eager little girl to come up and place a pink tutu on his lower body!

This wasn't the first accessory that Aurelia had placed onto the cat. She had also put fluffy rabbit paws on each of his limbs and covered up his metal ears with big and fluffy white rabbit ears.

Once Aurelia finished equipping Lucky with a tutu, she pulled out a big round rabbit tail and put it on by stuffing the cat's ordinary tail into the pocket.

"There! You are a rabbit now! A lucky rabbit!"

"Meow meow meow!"

Lucky did not enjoy the transformation he experienced. He looked and sounded embarrassed as he looked across his body and saw how much softer and less cool he had become.

"Miaow miaow."

Clixie looked amused as she playfully mocked the other cat's new form. Of course, the Rubarthan Sentinel Cat also underwent a transformation.

Aurelia had turned her into a miniature version of a hybrid tiger mech. Metal antennas stuck out from the top of her head while her forelimbs were covered by large but blunted metal paws. What truly reinforced her mech vibe was the harness she wore around the midsection. Two laser cannon-like weapon mounts stuck out at the side.

Whenever Clixie made a specific body movement, the 'laser cannons' even shot out a harmless projected beam that mercilessly struck the lucky rabbit!

"Meow!"

"Miaow miaow!"

"Hihihihhi!"

As Aurelia continued to play with the pair of cats, her parents along with several other mech designers had become completely engrossed in their own fabrication work.

The AP-VEX superfab most definitely stole the show during this fabrication run. Though Ves had to exchange 5,000,000 MTA merits for this high-quality production machine, he felt it was worth at least thrice this amount due to how well it facilitated everyone's work processes.

As a first-class superfab, it was able to process and work with a much wider range of materials than the Larkinson Clan's previous ELKINE 69 3D printer.

Ves truly valued this feature as the AP-VEX was able to work with rare and volatile exotics that could significantly damage a lower-quality production machine that was not rated to handle these complications.

Since the AP-VEX was designed to work with first-class materials, its performance when handling second-class materials was a lot better in every parameter.

It worked much faster while maintaining an impressive degree of control and consistency over the output. This allowed people like Ves and Gloriana to pay less attention to ensuring the machine was doing a proper job and direct more of their focus towards refining the areas that needed to be as exquisite as possible.

The components they produced at a rapid rate were all smoother and more refined without any exception. Even the components that traditionally challenged the mech designers such as those with complicated shapes or integrated a large variety of different exotics came out without any noticeable flaws.

Of course, Gloriana wasn't completely satisfied with the quality of the output. She felt she could do even better. In fact, she knew she could do better if she or any of the others entered into the right state of mind.

She grew a bit glum after she realized that neither she nor anyone else entered into an inspired state.

"It looks like serendipity has not graced us this time." Ves remarked to her as he sensed her disappointment through the design network. "Don't get too hung up over it. Our fabrication run is already proceeding better than expected. The extra time given to us is truly useful in making sure we do a thorough job in fabricating all of the parts."

His wife glanced down at the hammer hanging on the side of his toolbelt. "When are you going to use your greatest tool?"

"I thought you didn't like to use my Hammer of Brilliance."

"I don't want to use it on myself, but that does not mean I see the value of it when applied to other mech designers. I believe that Tifi has yet to experience a tap on her head, am I correct?"

Both of them glanced towards Tifi who was currently in charge of operating the AP-VEX. The fantastic superfab was about to start the process of fabricating a lot of advanced artificial musculature parts that were critically important to a brawler mech like the C-Man.

"Do you want a turn, Tifi?" Ves asked.

The woman thought for a moment. She had already been briefed on the false inspired state that the Hammer of Brilliance could grant to people.

The first time was always the most special moment. That was because mech designers had accumulated an enormous amount of incomplete theories and uncertain guesses in their minds.

As soon as Vulcan touched their minds, it suddenly became a lot easier to tie all of this loose information and data into solid and coherent theories.

This was an incredibly valuable gain to any mech designer. In the best situations, a mech designer might even become so inspired that their subsequent performance approached the effectiveness of a genuine inspired state!

That also made the timing of this move a lot more important. The greater the accumulation, the greater the brilliance.

However, delaying for too long was also wasteful. Those who missed out on this effect might have missed out on profound improvements on their work and design philosophies that they could have attained a long time ago with a single whack from a hammer.

There was no right answer for a decision like this. Tifi hungered for progress, but she also felt that this was not the right time for her to receive Vulcan's blessing for the first time.

She eventually shook her head. "I would say yes if I was the lead designer of the C-Man Project, but that is not the case. I think it is better to wait until I am working on a mech that is truly mine."

"Fair enough."

Though Gloriana seriously contemplated whether she should make an exception and allow her husband to whack her head with his hammer, she eventually shook her head and threw the suggestion out of her mind.

She only needed to take a single glance at the container filled with TESMAS to understand that she wouldn't be able to apply herself as much in this fabrication run than usual.

It was better to save herself up for a run where she could exert much more control over her work.

"Besides, there are too many uncertainties surrounding the C-Man design. My priority lies in ensuring that my new ideas can even be realized in the first place. I can wait to perfect them in a subsequent design project once I understand my work better."

The days went by faster than expected. The rapid pace of work along with the reduced amount of problems made it so that everyone entered the zone where they did not remain too stuck in the moment.

Of all of the Larkinsons in the secure workshop, no one was more impressed and bedazzled than Venerable Vincent!

As he witnessed the new parts of his upcoming expert mech being constructed one by one, he felt he was witnessing a moment of history.

Soon, his old and broken B-Man would get dismantled before being completely rebuilt as a unique and innovative expert brawler mech!

As Vincent's willpower constantly spread its influence through the active design network and made everyone aware of how the C-Man should fit his personality, he also gained a deeper appreciation of the technical side of mechs.

Of course, unlike a well-educated and intellectually-minded mech pilot like Venerable Casella Ingvar, Venerable Vincent hardly gained any actual understanding of the theories and mechanics of how mechs were able to operate. His understanding of the more advanced systems such as TESMAS did not advance at all because the technical sophistication of this powerful nanomachine system was too far out of his reach!

However, that did not stop Vincent from absorbing the more general and digestible insights from the various mech designers.

"You look so fascinated, Vincent." Raella Larkinson spoke as she gently rubbed her growing belly. "Is the design network really so great?"

"I wish you could experience this as well, babe. It's unreal how I feel right now. It is as if I am actively taking part in the building process of my own mech." Vincent spoke as he gazed intensely at the AP-VEX superfab. "I always knew there was a lot of depth to mechs, but I never paid attention to these details. It's different now. I think I can recognize what makes one mech better than the other. I also know what parts of an enemy mech I should target in my next fights."

The benefits he received were way beyond that and he was still doing his best to absorb more insights while he still could.

In fact, every expert pilot that went through the same experience when their expert mechs were being fabricated had also made a lot of gains.

Commander Casella Ingvar gained the largest benefit from this experience. Not only was she able to learn the most due to her personal strengths, she was also in a position to apply these gains the most in her role as a legion commander and field commander!

"What amazes you the most about your upcoming expert mech?" Raella asked.

"I think... it's the fact that it is truly built for me and Bravo in every way." He said. "I didn't see it before, but now I understand a lot better how much thought that the mech designers put into my machine. Everything is designed with my piloting style in mind. They even took into account my likes and dislikes for the most part. Do you know that Gloriana is really trying to make me become a god with the C-Man?"

"How does that even work?"

Vincent shrugged. "Don't ask me. Whatever Gloriana is sharing through this funny network is really weird to me. She just thinks that whatever she has set up will definitely give me a huge surprise once my expert mech is ready."

He did not have to wait too long. After over two days of fabrication work, the Larkinson Journeymen completed the fabrication phase.

They utilized the workshop's powerful and sophisticated scanners to examine the fabricated parts en masse in order to check and recheck that they were all within tolerance.

Once they were satisfied with their initial work, they moved on to assembling the mech.

The workshop's assembly system was much more powerful and comprehensive than anything they previously worked with. This came in incredibly handy when they brought in the broken and crippled form of the B-Man and started to strip it down with care.

The objective of this upgrade process was to transfer the spiritual foundation of the old mech to an entirely new form, so Gloriana and the others had to disassemble and assemble the mech at the same time.

Fortunately, this was not the first time they adopted this Ship of Theseus approach. Ves paid a lot of attention to make sure that nothing went wrong on this front.

Soon enough, a fairly complete 'skeleton' with plenty of 'internal organs' took shape. The C-Man was already half-way functional, but it only needed to go through one critically important process in order to complete the powerful machine.

"It's time to apply the TESMAS." Ves spoke.

Gloriana nodded. She had already approached the secure container and went through the process of unlocking. Several beeps sounded out as she inputted the final code.

"Step back and get ready!"

Although no one expected the batch of TESMAS to run out of control, everyone still thought it was best to retreat inside protective enclosures before they commenced the critical step.

Once they adopted every possible safety precaution, Gloriana decisively pressed the button.

A tide of nanomachines slowly surged out of the container. It was as if solid matter had come to life!

Gloriana stared keenly at what was happening because this was the moment when she would learn whether her efforts bore fruit.

The time had come for her to see whether the C-Man was capable of evolving into a god body!

Chapter 4094 A Living Body

To say Gloriana wasn't nervous was like saying that she was no longer interested in buying handbags.

Though her body didn't shake, her mind and spirit were abuzz with nervous energy. She could not predict with certainty what might happen once the TESMAS covered the open frame of the C-Man like a living coat.

The C-Man would not truly be complete and whole before this occurred.

She wished she could foresee with greater certainty of what would happen in a couple of minutes. However, every simulation and every calculation she made in the past few weeks granted her no meaningful information of what would happen at the final moment.

That was because the phenomena she paid attention to had never been done before. She could not look back on prior cases and experiences to develop accurate expectations. She was also unable to make use of the formidable processing power

available at the Genesis Lab because there was no way to express a concept like a god body with math!

Compared to someone who took a lot more comfort in numbers and simulation results like Gloriana, her husband was a lot more relaxed in this kind of situation.

Ves husband walked up to her and embraced her in a reassuring hug. "You did the best you could. You have reasons to be confident in your work. Believe in yourself. Even if the C-Man doesn't turn out as great as you expected, that doesn't mean it has to stay that way. You can always continue to iterate on its design and work on its parts until the expert mech truly reflects your vision."

His wife softly snorted. "That is easy for you to say. Your experiments always seem to work out in one way or another."

"That is the charm of making living products. You can always expect a result as life always finds a way. The only problem is that it is difficult to dial in a more precise result."

Gaia came to mind. Although Ves was undoubtedly the creator of his most powerful design spirit yet, the explosive growth of his latest spiritual product exceeded his imagination.

He hoped that the completed C-Man mech would not follow the same route. Though it was the most expensive Larkinson expert mech to date, he did not think it was likely that it would go out of control.

As he turned his attention back to the soon-to-be whole expert mech, his anticipation rose to a new height.

The C-Man was already alive and well in a sense. He succeeded in transferring the living personality of the B-Man in a new frame.

Though the living mech originally felt that the new C-Man frame was a bit too foreign, the compatibility between the two was so high that they smoothly integrated together!

Now, the final piece of the puzzle was about to fit itself into place.

Ves still found it astounding to see how a tide of tiny nanomachines was able to exert so much power. Even at this distance, he could feel there was nothing he could do if the nanomachines ever managed to engulf his body!

The TESMAS slowly crept up the legs of the C-Man.

The lower side of the expert mech was much more solid than the upper side of the machine. This was because it was important to ensure that the mech retained a stable base if anything went wrong with its TESMAS.

The fluid wave of rippling metal slowly crept up the legs and began to flow up to the torso. Everyone present in the workshop held their breaths as the TESMAS continued to fill up the voids and cavities that it was meant to occupy.

A lot of TESMAS diverted to the arms of the C-Man. As a brawler mech, it was critically important that its arms were thick, strong and resilient.

However, the C-Man derived a lot of combat power from harnessing the capabilities of TESMAS. It would be a waste to keep them away from the arms.

From the moment the tide of TESMAS engulfed the arms, the C-Man truly reached its final form!

A sense of completion exuded from the finished expert mech as the mech had become whole in spirit and body.

The mutual interaction between the two produced numerous different effects, the chief one being that every single part began to harmonize with each other!

Although nothing looked different from the naked eye, those with high sensitivity towards spirituality could sense that the C-Man had undergone an invisible metamorphosis that made it seem as if the machine had risen to another level!

"This..." Gloriana trailed as she could not find the words to describe what was happening.

The way the C-Man's structure and especially its TESMAS seemed to elevate beyond their initial state was a telling sign that an entirely new force was at work!

Gloriana's mood slowly lifted higher and higher as the C-Man continued to experience this gradual but unmistakable effect.

"The C-Man's frame... is evolving!"

While she had yet to gather any solid proof that the ongoing transformation was beneficial to Vincent and his new expert mech, her intuition strongly hinted to her that one of her hopes had finally come true!

She wasn't the only one to recognize what was happening.

"Congratulations, honey. While it hasn't turned into a masterwork mech, its physical frame is definitely undergoing interesting changes."

"A god body..." She whispered.

An increasing sense of elation overcame her mind. Although the C-Man seemed to change at a snail's pace, she knew that establishing this state was the most critical part of her work!

It would have been much worse if the C-Man's frame remained completely static. A lack of change suggested that Gloriana's ambitious plan to create a god body had failed.

"Let's take a closer look." Ves suggested. "I'm interested in studying this strengthening effect. This is the first time that I've come across a deliberate mechanism to evolve a physical machine by harnessing the power of spiritual energy. If this phenomenon managed to stick, then you have truly made a major leap in your design ability!"

Before the mech designers approached their latest expert mech, they first took the time to scan and examine the C-Man in order to ensure it was sound.

The first-class workshop suite included plenty of sophisticated scanning and detection equipment so it did not take long to complete this process.

Nothing stood out to them. The C-Man was built almost exactly according to plan.

Gloriana also took the time to test a few of the mech's active systems by remote. The nanomachines that made up the TESMAS still behaved as intended and did not show any deviations despite absorbing spiritual energy through their god markers.

Nothing was stopping them from taking a close and intimate look at their latest prestige product anymore.

"Let's go!"

Ves picked up Aurelia who was trying to understand what made the mech so important and moved towards the exit of the control room.

Everyone else followed suit and floated down until they stood before the impressive expert mech.

The closer they came to the mech, the more they could feel its powerful presence. As a powerful machine that was transitioning towards a third order living mech, the C-Man exuded plenty of strength and vitality!

Ves could feel much clearer than other mechs how active it was. Part of it was because mechs that utilized smart metal needed to be powered at all times in order to keep the nanomachines in control.

Another part of it was due to the mysterious process that Gloriana had succeeded in bringing in motion!

Now that he came close enough, he could sense much more of what was going on with the C-Man.

The newly completed expert mech was celebrating its new and improved form!

Not only that, the C-Man also generated a dynamic air that made it seem as if it was constantly accumulating more power.

There was the sense that the C-Man was constantly moving forward despite looking unchanged on the surface.

"Wooo... so shiny..." Aurelia whispered.

"Yes, sweetie. The C-Man sure looks shiny, doesn't it?" Ves smiled as he rocked her daughter's tiny form. "It's a mech that is designed to be the center of attention. No one will be able to miss it on the battlefield."

The C-Man looked spectacular in a heroic way.

Just like its previous B-Man incarnation, the expert mech featured a prominent golden muscle cuirass.

The difference from its predecessor was that the C-Man's lines and contours were even more impressive and exaggerated than before!

The fact that its surface actually consisted of nanomachines that adopted specific shapes and colors meant that the C-Man could always alter how it looked.

The proportions of the brawler mech were significantly different from that of other mechs. Since its arms served as its primary weapons, they looked considerably beefier than usual, up to the point where the C-Man almost started to resemble a gorilla!

Of course, Venerable Vincent wanted his expert mech to resemble his own physique as much as possible, so it was still an upright humanoid mech for the most part.

One of the more impressive aspects of the C-Man was how much in tune it was to Bravo. The B-Man already integrated fairly well with the design spirit but the C-Man seemed to take it a step further.

This was a feature that both Ves and Gloriana had worked on in order to ensure that Venerable Vincent could more easily get in sync with the design spirit that had accompanied him for a number of years.

Already, Ves could feel his blood pumping faster. Bravo stood out increasingly more as a motivator. The design spirit seemed to have found its niche as an influence that was capable of igniting an individual's competitive drive!

However, above all else, what truly mattered to Gloriana was the fact that the C-Man was truly evolving to a different state.

Though Gloriana could not yet tell the direction of her expert mech's physical evolution, she truly hoped that it was moving closer to becoming a masterwork mech.

If the C-Man truly followed this trajectory, then she would have succeeded in creating a revolutionary new method that had the potential to make masterwork mechs much more ubiquitous than before!

Even though producing masterwork mechs through growth was not as satisfying as getting everything right from the start, Gloriana would not say no to having her work improve by themselves!

"What is happening to the physical structure of the C-Man shares a remarkable resemblance to what is happening to our daughter's body." Ves observed.

He examined his daughter who was clinging to his side. Aurelia received a number of spiritual treatments from Ves and the Superior Mother that had fundamentally set her apart from other humans.

The fact that Aurelia's body cells were able to absorb spiritual energy had always caused Ves to wonder what it meant.

All he could figure out was that the process was probably beneficial. He thought it was only possible to empower organic life forms in this manner, but Gloriana had clearly proved to him that it could also apply to inorganic products!

This was a huge breakthrough and one that might have profound implications if the C-Man's gradual evolution process yielded more drastic results in the future!

Ves slowly frowned. "We can all see that the C-Man is changing, but... at this rate, it would probably take years before we can observe a measurable increase in performance."

"Your assessment is incorrect." Gloriana shook her head. "What you see is merely the beginning. Haven't you forgotten what I told you about the mechanisms of a god body? The C-Man isn't meant to be hidden away. It is meant to be seen and admired. Let us take a long rest. Once we have recovered, let us introduce our latest expert mech to the rest of our clan!"

She was right! They did not spend so much time on developing such an iconic-looking mech just to remain hidden away!

Chapter 4095 The True Power of TESMAS

The wait was agonizing to Venerable Vincent.

It had been a long time since he broke through during a pivotal battle at the end of the Purgatory Campaign.

The moment where he became completely in sync with the B-Man and manifested Bravo in his most powerful state was an unforgettable moment to him and the soldiers who participated in the battle.

Vincent constantly dreamed of reliving this moment. He became more enthusiastic about piloting mechs than ever and no longer felt bothered by the doubts that plagued him in the past.

His confidence soared now that he had become a lot stronger than before now that he had become a genuine demigod and expert pilot. As one of just a handful of high-ranking expert pilots in the Larkinson Clan, he had the capital to place himself above the vast majority of colleagues!

Yet despite his yearning to get back in the cockpit, he was no longer able to pilot the B-Man since the Larkinson Clan settled in Davute.

The custom mech had suffered too much damage and repairing it was not cost-effective once the Larkinsons decided to transform it into an expert mech.

For months, Venerable Vincent tried to pass the time by training in other ways.

He exercised his body and became engrossed when he slightly managed to exceed his previous limits due to his advancement.

He piloted other Larkinson mechs and lamented how they were too weak for him to exert his new strengths.

He even tried out simulation systems but quickly became frustrated by how fake they were. He might not have noticed the difference back when he was just a regular pilot, but at his current state the inconsistencies were far too glaring.

It didn't help that the simulator pods regularly glitched as soon as he got a bit excited! Many of them were incapable of coping with the power of expert pilots!

Months went by as Vincent impatiently waited to get back in the saddle where he belonged.

His torment had finally come to an end.

After the participating mech designers took a well-deserved rest, they woke up and prepared a thorough testing session in order to see whether their efforts truly paid off this time!

Although the C-Man looked completely fine in its current state, no one could say for certain whether this innovative mech would be able to perform as intended.

Vincent did not have any doubts, though. He had unwavering faith in his new expert mech even before it was built. The Larkinson mech designers had never let him down and this time would be no different.

Only one unexpected occurrence took place. Just as the preparations were being made, Gloriana approached Vincent with an interesting request.

"Would you like to broadcast the footage of the C-Man's initial activation and testing session to the public?"

"Huh?" The expert pilot blinked. "Aren't we supposed to keep the details of my expert mech's performance a secret? I have always been told it would be bad if our enemies have seen our mechs in action beforehand. They can make targeted preparations to counter our stuff."

"You are not wrong, Venerable Vincent. This consideration still weighs over our heads. However, there are additional variables at play that have given us reasons to make a different choice this time. I've already explained to you what it might mean if I have succeeded in turning the C-Man into a god body. The current phenomenon affecting the frame of your expert mech is a sign that it has indeed acquired a god body, but what is a god without any worshipers?"

Venerable Vincent widened his eyes. "Are you saying you want to unveil the C-Man to the public so that they can become its fans?"

"Correct! I cannot say whether this will be of any use, but I have confidence that if even a fraction of the audience have converted into your new 'fans', your expert mech may receive additional benefits. In order to make sure that our audience will be able to enjoy the show, we will make changes to the testing routine so that it will look more exciting to outside observers."

"Aren't you worried about leaking sensitive information about the C-Man's performance?"

"Not as much as you think. We already have numerous existing expert mechs and we will undoubtedly obtain more in the coming years. Our clan has grown to the point where the need for secrecy doesn't weigh as highly as before. In fact, it is better for us to raise our profile and publicize at least a portion of our strength and specialties so that we can gain more respect from other parties in the Red Ocean. Our business

operations will benefit immensely if we can show to everyone that we are truly capable of developing stronger and more elaborate mechs."

The Larkinson Clan was first and foremost a group that earned its living by selling mechs. It would absolutely give the LMC's nascent commercial operations in the Red Ocean a boost if it could show that its mech designers were capable of developing a stellar expert mech!

"Besides, you do not mind performing in front of an audience, do you?" Gloriana smirked. "This is your big opportunity to become a celebrity. As long as you succeed in putting on a good show, then we might allow you to perform in additional PR events."

Venerable Vincent instantly became stoked. "Hahaha, have no fear, madame! I was made to be the public face of our clan! I haven't spent all of that time competing in arena competitions because I was shy. Go ahead and broadcast my upcoming performance to the galactic net!"

"Good. Good. That is the spirit that I wish to see from you. We will be delaying the testing session by half a day so that we can spread the news and advertise this event. I don't think we need to be afraid of not attracting enough viewers because it is rare to unveil an expert mech in such a high-profile manner. I can at least guarantee you that the people in Davute will definitely take note."

Though Vincent looked pained when he heard that he would have to wait even longer, it was for a worthy cause.

"Understood. This will give me more time to hang out with the C-Man and get a feel for my new expert mech before I pilot it for the first time."

"You go do that. I will need to contact Professor Almar of Melmen Advanced Systems in order to inform her of this development. She will probably be pleased with what we are doing as we will be showcasing her new signature product."

TESMAS was incredibly powerful but also ludicrously expensive to build. Just the fact that it took around 5 kilograms to produce a full application of this extravagant smart armor system was enough to scare away a lot of potential customers!

If the Larkinsons were able to show that their C-Man could display incredible strength and versatility with the help of its TESMAS, then that would definitely provide a substantial business boost to its developer.

What was even better was that the Larkinson Clan recently acquired 7.75 percent of the shares of Melmen Advanced Systems. Helping the developing company would ultimately help the Larkinsons!

The hours went by quickly as the Larkinsons hurriedly moved into action. They brought in additional assets and planned more elaborate demonstrations in order to make sure that everyone that tuned in to the broadcast would get a clear view of the C-Man's excellence!

Vincent also had a busy day all of a sudden as a team of professionals had come to coach him on what he should and shouldn't do in front of a public broadcast.

All of this was a form of torture to him as he did anything but what he truly wished to do. At least he was allowed to stay in the vicinity of his expert mech so that he could gain an unspoken understanding with his expert mech.

Soon, the final hour had come. The Larkinson Clan had already opened up a broadcast on the opening page of their virtual portal. Millions of people had already tuned in and that number was climbing with each passing second.

After all, it was not every day that one of the local powers was willing to showcase one of their trump cards!

Despite generating a lot of questions and confusions on why the Larkinson Clan would possibly reveal one of its strategic assets, it did not stop all of the mech fanatics and those concerned about the regional hierarchy from paying attention.

One peculiar decision the Larkinsons had made for this public testing session was to conduct it on the surface of Davute VII.

This was why the Larkinsons had moved everything they needed for this occasion to a wide open training field that they rented for the day.

There was nothing of importance in any of the surrounding regions, so there were no concerns about any accidents harming other people.

As Vincent suited up and entered the cockpit of his dormant but always active machine, he closed his eyes and tried to get into tune with his new expert mech.

"Vincent." Ves finally spoke to him through a transmission. "You are up in a minute. Get ready to start. The eyes of tens of millions people are on you right now, and more will doubtlessly be viewing the footage at a later date. I don't need to remind you that you are representing our clan right now. Don't make me regret this decision."

"Hey, you can always rely on me, Ves. I never failed to deliver!"

"We'll see about that."

As soon as a minute went by, Vincent no longer held himself back and decisively pressed the ornate activation button!

Since the mech was already active at a low power state, it quickly activated all of its other systems.

At the same time, the neural interface that was custom-developed for the C-Man established a connection to Vincent's powerful mind and will for the first time.

The expert pilot entered nirvana as he had finally returned home for the first time since he advanced to his current rank!

At the same time, the C-Man joyously welcomed back its battle partner after spending a long time as a broken and neglected custom mech before its life-changing upgrade.

Both of them had missed each other so much that they immediately and spontaneously harmonized with each other. A burst of radiant gold corona exploded from the impressive-looking frame as their jubilation produced a considerable degree of true resonance!

In fact, the two were so happy to bond with each other again that Venerable Vincent's resonance strength quickly rose beyond his expected level.

"What?" Ves looked shocked. "His resonance strength has already reached 5.34 lavers?"

This was more than what was typical for a relatively new expert pilot who had yet to practice with an expert mech before this point.

However, after recalling that Venerable Vincent and the previous iteration of the current mech had both achieved the legendary state of Unity of Man and Machine, then maybe this reaction should not be a surprise.

All of this indicated that Vincent was truly piloting the right mech at the moment!

Once the expert pilot regained his composure, he grinned as he could feel how much power he possessed.

This was a far cry from all of the other mechs he had piloted in the past!

"Let's go, buddy."

The C-Man finally took its first step. It moved slowly at first, and Vincent wasn't in a hurry to test its speed.

The ground rumbled as the powerful expert mech stepped outside of the mech hangar and stepped out into the open.

As the light of the local star shone down on the C-Man, its gleaming white-and-gold surface already received a lot of compliments from the audience!

As Vincent basked in the attention that he must be receiving, he soon recognized a shortcoming.

"My C-Man looks good, but it can look even better."

He activated a new command that wasn't present in any of his previous mechs. The front torso of his expert mech started to ripple as the TESMAS became active all of a sudden. The previous definition of the muscle cuirass became murky as its shape started to shift and change.

"What is that idiot doing now? Why is he deviating from the plan?" Ves asked as he watched what was going on from a control room. His eyes soon widened in horrified realization. "Wait, don't tell me...?!"

The C-Man already looked masculine from the onset. Gloriana had done a good job at interpreting and realizing Vincent's wishes.

However, as a woman and someone who did not have the highest opinion of boys, there were certain... limits of what she could tolerate as a mech designer.

Vincent did not share Gloriana's aesthetic tastes. His own tastes were substantially different.

Normally, mech pilots such as himself were helpless to do anything about it, but this was a different situation.

Since TESMAS made up the exterior of the C-Man, that meant that Vincent could change it to suit whatever shape he wanted!

As such, he worked together with the C-Man to make the expert mech look manlier.

Its existing muscle definition became thicker and more exaggerated. Though Vincent still applied at least some restraint, there was no doubt that the abs and pectorals looked even larger than life than before!

Yet these were not the areas that Vincent was concerned about. What he truly paid attention to was a prominent component that sat lower than the other areas that were being changed.

As more and more people tuned into the broadcast, they gained a clear view of the C-Man expanding the size and girth of its codpiece!

"What is he doing?! Didn't we tell him to control his impulses?!"

Ves and numerous other Larkinsons became increasingly more horrified as Vincent erased the original design of the C-Man's codpiece.

Much like its predecessor, Gloriana designed a subtle and artful V-shaped codpiece that did not look overly masculine.

Though Vincent did not dislike its design, he felt it did not do his manhood justice.

"I need more room."

This was why he took control of the TESMAS in order to apply his own design that he had come up with a long time ago back when he was trying to pass the time.

The V-shaped codpiece that resembled a belt more than anything turned into a more pronounced and vertical T-shaped codpiece that began to adopt increasingly more exaggerated proportions!

Although it did not look obscene due to the fact it looked like a mechanical component that could be found on any mech, the audience had no doubts about the actual meaning of this dramatic redesign!

"This is the true power of TESMAS!" Vincent exulted as he applied his own vision of his expert mech.

Chapter 4096 Raw Might

Ves palmed his face as he saw what Vincent had wrought now that he had gained the power to reengineer his own mech.

Part of the charm of smart metal systems was their ability to change their shapes and adopt new forms on the fly. They enabled smart metal mechs to turn into a myriad of different shapes and forms that were precisely chosen to counter a specific opponent or cope with a challenging situation.

This was also the driving reason why Ves and Gloriana both agreed to add an expensive smart armor system to the C-Man's design. It was a good match for Vincent's expert mech as the extra flexibility and versatility substantially increased the practicality and combat effectiveness of a brawler mech.

Yet by focusing so much on the combat applications of TESMAS, the mech designers overlooked a crucial factor.

They could not imagine that Vincent would take the initiative to alter the exquisite, masculine visual design that Gloriana and Sara Voiken had carefully developed for the C-Man and substitute it with his own design!

Under ordinary circumstances, It was unthinkable for mech designers to imagine that a mech pilot would be arrogant to do their jobs. People like Ves and Gloriana had studied for many years and worked with mechs and technology at levels that were completely incomprehensible to ordinary people.

Mech designers therefore developed an assumption that those who weren't technically inclined would just passively accept a mech as is once it fell into their hands.

Normally, those who received a mech wouldn't dare to make any changes themselves. At best, they might ask a crew of mech technicians or other sources of technical support to make thoughtful and logical modifications to an existing design.

No one expected Vincent to just go ahead and hijack control over the C-Man's TESMAS just so that he could alter their default external contours!

Although Vincent did not possess the technical skills to make these changes by himself, he was still able to manage it by relying on his living mech.

As such, the C-Man slimmed down in certain areas and gained bulk in other areas. The proportions of the expert mech no longer matched Vincent's actual athletic physique as closely as before.

Instead, the C-Man took on an appearance that became increasingly larger than life. It detached itself from the idea of trying to emulate reality and went on to embrace an impossible ideal!

The results spoke for themselves. The C-Man took its masculinity to another level, not just by featuring arm, chest and abdomen muscles that were considerably more exaggerated than before, but also by completely reengineering its codpiece!

The previous codpiece design was an artful compromise between practicality and appearance. Gloriana had tried her best to achieve a balance between Vincent's psychological needs and the practical value of adding an extra layer of armor at the lower midsection of a mech.

The new design almost completely blew out the latter consideration and fully attempted to satisfy the expert pilot's vain desires!

As the Larkinsons and the people tuning in to the public broadcast beheld the transformation, a lot of them grew speechless.

Vincent had clearly done his research on codpieces. The T-shaped codpiece deliberately adopted an angular, blocky shape that made the 'stem' look like an ordinary mechanical component as opposed to a... fleshy organ.

Another design quirk that Vincent had adopted was to make the codpiece protrude forward to an extent while also pointing its stem straight downwards. This gave the codpiece the illusion that it was a narrow protective skirt that was designed to block attacks from striking the middle of the lower waist section.

However, it only took a little imagination for people to figure out the symbolism of this codpiece.

This was especially after the mech just completed a visual transformation that made it look a lot manlier than usual!

As expected, the change that was broadcasted live to many people living in Davute and beyond triggered a lot of reactions!

"What is this expert pilot doing?!"

"How vain can the guy in the cockpit be to make such a long crotch section?"

"This is obscene! How dare the Larkinson Clan soil my children's eyes! It is a disgrace to sexualize mechs!"

Though Vincent undoubtedly triggered a storm of controversy through his actions, he also attracted a lot of positive reactions as well!

"Wow! The Larkinsons are the only ones who know how to design mechs with personality in Davute. There's none of that boring and minimalistic design styles in their mech catalog. They truly know how to make their mechs look good!"

"This is what the mech market has been missing all this time. Why the hell aren't mech companies developing more masculine mechs? I would feel twice as strong and confident if I piloted a mech that looks as great as this expert mech!"

"The Larkinsons already enjoy a history of designing hyperfeminine mechs like the Valkyrie Redeemer. It is high time for them to cater to real men like us. Women shouldn't be the only ones who get to enjoy mechs that validate their existence."

The viewership pattern swung wildly in the following minutes. Certainly, hundreds of thousands of people had closed their feeds, but as word of mouth quickly spread among the regional mech community and beyond, more people began to tune in to the live broadcast on the Larkinson Clan's official virtual portal.

Over 5 million people and counting had joined the audience!

The cost to pause or end the broadcast became a lot higher as a result. No matter the reason why they decided to tune in, the Larkinsons would profoundly damage their

reputation and disappoint a lot of existing and future customers if they decided to stop the show in advance.

"Proceed with the testing session. Tell Vincent to stay on track this time."

Though Venerable Vincent received a bunch of instructions, he did not pay much attention to them. From the moment he and his expert mech appeared in front of a public broadcast, he had already entered a different state of mind.

He brought out his sense of showmanship and completely gave in to the urge to show off in front of a rising crowd!

Though he wasn't able to see his audience or gain access to any channels that allowed him to hear their praises, he could feel the adoration that he no doubt evoked by looking so incredibly manly.

His grin widened as his confidence rose even further.

His satisfaction became so strong that his emotional bond with the C-Man became even stronger.

In turn, the C-Man also responded well to Vincent's increasing joy and appreciation for its new appearance.

The two became so in tune with each other that neither of them needed to put any effort to generate true resonance.

The bright and rippling golden corona around the expert mech grew even brighter, causing the C-Man to look as if it was a god that had descended onto the mortal plain!

This generated a ripple effect among the growing audience as more and more people admired the power and vibe it exuded.

While there were many expert mechs that were even stronger and more imposing in battle, few of them could make an impression as profound and heroic as that of the C-Man.

"It's finally moving!"

As Vincent's control and harmonization with his expert mech reached a new height, he became more eager and determined to stage the show of his lifetime.

He would not be able to do justice to his fantastic new expert mech if he was unable to show that the C-Man was far more than just a pretty display model.

"C'mon, buddy! Let us show all of those people what we are truly capable of. Looking handsome is just one of our superpowers!"

The expert mech proceeded to move to the elaborate obstacle course. It was not an ordinary course, but one that the Larkinsons had expanded and fortified in order to better test and showcase the C-Man's land and aerial mobility!

Once it reached the starting line, the mech dramatically bent down as if it was about to participate in a race.

A few seconds later, it leapt forward and raced along the middle path with great power!

Despite its bulk, the C-Man possessed a lot of strength which allowed it to sprint forward with great momentum!

As the expert mech started to take turns and overcome numerous obstacles in its path, it showed that while it was unable to shift its forward momentum as easily as lighter mechs, it was still able to navigate complex environments at good speeds by relying on its excellent control.

Once the expert mech stumbled upon a trickier environment that simulated a collapsed urban battlefield, it began to showcase its morphing powers by using the power of TESMAS to alter its shape to squeeze through tighter openings.

As the environment became more vertical, the C-Man also started to leap across gaps and utilize its flight system to rapidly climb upwards.

The C-Man stopped once it reached the end of the obstacle course. Although it had not shown off the extent of its formidable mobility, the performance it revealed so far thoroughly impressed much of the audience, particularly those who understood mechs on a technical level.

"I didn't think this expert mech would be so agile on the move."

"It has struck a good balance between mass and maneuverability."

"The pilot is able to exert an impressive degree of control over its precise movements."

"How is it able to move so quickly and nimbly without tripping on its own codpiece?"

As the audience admired how powerful and smoothly the C-Man ran through the obstacle course, Vincent already focused his attention to what came next.

The previous run was just a warm-up routine for him and his expert mech. They had quickly familiarized themselves with each other and fine-tuned their cooperation in the past few minutes.

Now that they gained an even deeper understanding of each other, they fully looked forward to testing their mettle in battle!

"I'm ready!" Vincent roared! "Give me something to smash! These fists of mine are built to dish out punishment!"

The testing ground soon replied by unveiling hundreds of drones and battle bots.

While the quality and power of these automated combat machines were not that impressive, their power and threat was not inferior to actual mechs.

The Larkinsons invested a lot of money to acquire this batch of machines, solely for the purpose of giving the C-Man a stage to showcase its prowess against hordes of regular opponents!

Vincent and his expert mech's eagerness grew so much at the sight that the C-Man seemed to glow even brighter!

The battle-hungry expert mech theatrically smashed its fists against each other as the opposition started to utilize its arsenal of rifles to take potshots at the C-Man.

Naturally, these attacks completely failed to damage the expert brawler mech in the slightest even though it had not bothered to activate its resonance shield.

"Hahaha! That tickles! Let me return the favor and show you how a real man fights!"

The C-Man jumped off the ledge and dove in with a fist that glowed and thrummed with power!

BOOM!

Over a dozen nearby battle bots fell apart as the C-Man's resonance-empowered punch produced a powerful, kinetic explosion at the impact site!

The closest machines had crumpled or fallen apart while the more distant ones affected by the opening attack had lost their balance.

This was just the beginning!

As half of the battle bots started to concentrate their firepower at the expert mech while the other half pulled out their melee weapons and attempted to mob the C-Man from every direction, Vincent completely disregarded their threat and began to wail into every opposing machine in his way!

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Even without empowering the C-Man's arms with true resonance, the physical might the expert mech was able to exert was more than enough to crumple any regular mech or equivalent machine!

In just a short amount of time, the C-Man completely conquered the hearts of many observers by showcasing its awe-inspiring physical prowess and its ability to shrug off incoming attacks with no apparent concern for its integrity!

"Look at those bots getting dismantled in quick succession. They might as well be made out of wood seeing how little they can actually stop the new expert mech."

"This is a real man's mech! There is none of that nonsense about wielding rifles in its design. It's all about getting up close and personal with this melee mech."

"Throwing this expert mech in the middle of a mech army is like putting in a wolf among sheep. There is no way that any ordinary mech unit can survive an encounter with this punching machine!"

Chapter 4097 Star of the Show

The C-Man completely showed its dominance when fighting against the drones and battle bots arrayed against it. The way it punched the opposing machines to pieces while navigating through the storm of incoming attacks impressed a lot of the people who were watching the live broadcast!

Of course, the C-Man was not the most powerful or effective mech in dealing with hordes of weaker opponents.

The C-Man was limited in its ability to inflict mass destruction by its lack of ranged weapons and other potent weapon systems.

Venerable Vincent also did not possess refined empowered fighting moves and fighting styles that could enable him to exert his true resonance in more exquisite ways.

If Venerable Dise and the First Sword had ended up in this situation, they would have doubtably utilized powerful and advanced sword techniques that could obliterate dozens of mechs at once by unleashing a series of propagating sword energy attacks!

Still, even though Venerable Vincent did not follow the path of traditional swordsmanship, he and his expert mech still possessed other solutions to increase their killing efficiency.

After Vincent had his fill of punching his opponents by relying on the C-Man's physical strength alone, he began to resonate with his machine in order to elevate its parameters beyond the power of technology.

Empowered by Vincent's soaring force of will, the C-Man under his direction turned into a golden terror that was able to produce explosions with every punch!

These unnatural concussive blows not only obliterated the opponent in front of them, but also blasted out into a cone that damaged the machines behind the immediate target!

Vincent and the C-Man became more and more creative with the way in which they expressed their power. More and more mechs emerged from hidden openings beneath the ground, thereby providing them with plenty of opportunities to explore and experiment with their newfound abilities!

"Expert mechs are so much better than ordinary mechs!" Vincent exclaimed! "I'm no longer limited by the design of my machine. With true resonance, I can make everything better!"

The more he harnessed the power of true resonance, the more he understood its essence and its possibilities.

Although he already learned quite a lot about true resonance by receiving lessons from the Larkinson Clan's older and more experienced expert pilots, there was no better way to learn about what high-ranking mechs and mech pilots were capable of by harnessing this power in person!

Venerable Vincent's mood surged even further as the heat of combat drove him to perform even more flamboyantly than before!

"Punching isn't the only way I can beat you all up! I can do much more!"

The C-Man began to resort to other methods to dismantle the opposition. It opened up its hands and began to grapple, squeeze and throw the battle bots that were still in the fight!

Though its pace had slowed as a result, it was a lot harder for opposing machines to avoid and escape the C-Man's attacks.

After grabbing and tearing apart a dozen battle bots in quick succession, Vincent began to employ more creativity and utilized the advantages of his expert mechs in flashier and more extravagant moves!

For example, it grabbed onto the frames of two machines and actually lifted them up at once!

Like a barbarian who had just lifted up two large tree trunks, the C-Man showed its absolute dominance over the opposing mechs by clubbing them with its improvised weapons!

What the C-Man lacked in sophistication and finesse, it more than made up for it with its extravagant moves and raw displays of might.

The expert mech wasn't finished with finding new ways to demolish the opposition. It raced forward and bent low in order to grab two more battle bots by their legs.

The C-Man then lifted up and hovered over the ground, lifting its two captives above the ground.

"What is he doing?"

Venerable Vincent soon made clear why he made these moves as the C-Man slowly began to spin on its axis.

Numerous people spurted out whatever they were drinking as the C-Man turned into a whirlwind of metal and golden power!

Like a spinning top that had gone out of control, the spinning C-Man collided into a formation of surviving battle bots and completely bashed them aside or apart!

Of course, the machines used to inflict this damage did not last that long, but that didn't bother the C-Man at all as it grabbed hold of replacement bots in order to prolong its violent outburst!

A field of debris and half-recognizable wrecks was all that was left of the force of battle bots that had been programmed to fight the expert mech.

The C-Man did not look affected in the slightest even after it had gone through an entire army of automated opponents.

Even though the battle bots were not as threatening as actual mechs, they still presented viewers with a clear and evocative demonstration of the C-Man's battle power!

"There aren't many expert mechs that are as powerful as this new Larkinson mech from the onset, and there are even fewer that can look so good while doing so. This expert mech has made me gain a whole new appreciation of brawler mechs!"

"I thought the Larkinsons were clowning around by transforming this mech into a parody of a self-aggrandizing statue, but now I feel it looks exactly right for the job. A mech that can lift other machines and swing them around like clubs deserves to look this awesome!"

"No wonder this mech's codpiece is so big. With this much strength, the mech has so many balls that it takes a lot more room to project those jewels!"

As the Larkinsons monitored the viewership numbers and the reactions from the audience, they noticed a distinct swing in both parameters.

"Thirty million people have tuned into the broadcast! Most of the new viewers come from outside Davute!"

"Word of mouth is spreading to Magair and several other middle zones. We have even managed to attract a growing number of viewers from the old galaxy."

"The negative reactions from the C-Man's physical transformation have subsided. They have been crowded out by the positive reactions from our expert mech's performance!"

What was even more poignant was that the public responded even better to the live broadcast when the C-Man began to perform more flamboyantly than before!

No serious expert mech and dignified expert pilot would have pulled out some of the stunts that the C-Man went out of its way to perform. The instance where it picked up different bots and utilized them as improvised weapons generated a particularly strong response!

"Whatever Venerable Vincent is doing is working!" Gavin Neumann exclaimed as he studied the incoming data. "While not everyone is impressed by the C-Man, it has provoked a remarkable amount of enthusiasm from several demographic groups! Young and middle-aged men have especially become fans of the C-Man!"

"What did you say, Benny?" Ves looked confused. "People are actually falling in love with the C-Man?"

"It's like a real life action drama star." His assistant explained. "It might not be obvious to you, but Venerable Vincent is playing to the crowd. The C-Man's actions in the field are similar to the performances of mechs that star in action dramas. In essence, Venerable Vincent turned himself into the action hero of his own show! He's a born showman!"

That caused Ves to take a second look at Vincent's conduct.

Though the expert pilot was definitely taking the opportunity to indulge in all of his childish and juvenile impulses, it was only now that it became clear that Vincent was pursuing a deliberate strategy!

"Let Vincent do what he wants." Gloriana spoke up. "Don't forget that the primary goal of this broadcast is to activate the god body. Whatever ridicule we invite from certain people is not as important as attracting the admiration and worship of millions more people. The more Vincent turns this demonstration into a spectacle, the more attention he draws to his expert mech. The viewership numbers are already multiple times greater than we initially anticipated."

Both of them expected the numbers to grow even further. This was because the most exciting phase of the testing session was about to commence!

The C-Man leisurely flew above the debris field of its own making. The remains of broken machines served as a testament of its raw destructive prowess.

The mech arrived at an empty field soon afterwards. As the C-Man cooled down from its previous exertion, Venerable Vincent became more pumped than ever when he realized that his most difficult fight yet was about to start.

A new mech appeared on the field.

The Everchanger had once again been tasked with testing the combat effectiveness of a newly-completed expert mech.

As if in response to the naked power exuded by the C-Man, Venerable Joshua proactively resonated with his expert mech, causing the Everchanger to generate a powerful green corona!

Two different expert pilots and two different domains collided against each other.

The momentum of the two Larkinson expert mechs rose steadily as neither of their mech pilots thought of themselves as inferior!

"No offense, Vincent, but there is no way you can beat me." Joshua transmitted to his colleague. "I'm years ahead of you and I'm piloting a masterwork mech."

Vincent arrogantly snorted. "Your antique is already outdated. My C-Man is brand-new and based completely on heartland-level tech and parts. It doesn't really matter how flawless your Everchanger is when even a sloppy version of my expert mech is already three times stronger!"

"My mech is largely made out of Unending armor. You can't even create a single dent in my Everchanger's armor!"

"Hah, it's even more impossible for you to damage my C-Man!" Vincent spat back. "My TESMAS is boosted by 5 kilograms of phasewater!"

Old and new confronted each other on different levels. Even the Larkinsons grew curious to what extent the C-Man could compete against the Everchanger.

Both mechs were strong! Both mechs were piloted by remarkable warriors! Both mechs possessed their own trump cards that they relied upon to exert great might!

As the tension between the two expert pilots reached a certain threshold, Venerable Joshua finally made the first move!

Naturally, it wouldn't do something as stupid as trying to get into a fistfight with a machine that specialized in close-ranged brawls.

Instead, the expert hero mech engaged its flight system but angled itself backwards so that it distanced itself from the C-Man!

At the same time, the Everchanger snapped up its Vitalus luminar crystal rifle and fired a barrage of resonance-empowered laser beams.

A trio of bright green laser beams struck the golden resonance shield of the C-Man. The new expert mech was not affected by the attack as it began to sprint and fly forwards.

Both mechs were not weak in terms of mobility. They traversed a lot of ground as the C-Man attempted to close the distance.

While the Everchanger kept firing back at its pursuer, it wasn't able to maintain its distance.

The difference in tech level was too noticeable!

While Ves had invested a lot in the components of the Everchanger when he designed his favorite expert mech, he didn't have access to anything better at the time.

It was different now that the Larkinsons had managed to gain a foothold in the Red Ocean!

Their vastly greater wealth along with access to better product catalogs meant that Gloriana and the other mech designers were able to outfit the C-Man with comprehensively more powerful parts and systems!

Whether it was running speed or flight speed in aerial conditions, the C-Man showed that it was at least thirty percent faster than the Everchanger despite weighing more!

Ves already had a suspicion that the Everchanger would fall behind in this aspect, but to see that the gulf had grown so wide did not put him in a good mood.

"We need to get around with upgrading our older expert mechs. I'm sure that Venerable Tusa will be happy if his Dark Zephyr can catch up to the performance of the later expert mechs."

Chapter 4098 Energized TESMAS

As soon as the Everchanger showed up, the viewership numbers spiked.

It was one thing to test an expert mech in a typical testing session.

It was another thing to pit the same machine against another expert mech!

Spars like these were rare spectacles because most organizations did not take the initiative to broadcast the performance of their high-ranking mechs.

Information was power. Publicizing even a portion of the performance and the battle tactics of an expert mech might grant enemies a decisive advantage in a future battle!

However, it was not unheard of for the public to be able to witness the prowess of expert mechs.

Conflicts such as the Komodo War often produced a lot of battle footage that got leaked on the galactic net.

While the owners and users of the expert mechs did not wish to publicize the performance of their machines, the same did not hold true to their opponents.

There were also other organizations that might possess similar considerations to that of the Larkinson Clan.

In regions where reputation and demonstrations of power were essential for groups to remain in power, it was not uncommon for them to selectively show off their expert mechs in choreographed shows.

However, ever since people started to pour into the Red Ocean and settle in the newly conquered territories, none of the groups from Davute had taken the initiative to show off an expert mech.

Today, the Larkinson Clan not only took the initiative to present the C-Man, but it also showcased the power of the Everchanger!

Naturally, the Larkinsons did not intend to show off every single feature of the two expert mechs.

While Ves was more willing to reveal the secrets of the C-Man than the Everchanger, he still wanted the two machines to retain a few surprises.

As such, neither expert pilots were allowed to go all out in their effort to defeat their sparring opponent.

Right now, Venerable Joshua felt a little bad because the clan patriarch had prohibited him from making use of the interesting new resonating abilities that he had developed as of late.

For example, he could add a bit of extra punch to his ranged attacks by working together with the Illustrious One.

He could also boost the speed of his expert mech by borrowing the power of another design spirit.

However, these prime abilities were all quite new and had yet to be exposed on the galactic net. The Larkinsons wanted Joshua to keep his versatile bag of tricks under wraps so that anyone who thought they had the Everchanger figured out would be met with a nasty surprise if they ever launched an attack!

It was unfortunate that this also left Venerable Joshua without as many options to fend off his pursuer.

"How am I supposed to beat the C-Man if I have to fight with one of my arms tied behind my back?"

He knew that the fight would be a lot more even as a result.

To be fair, Venerable Vincent did not have the time to develop his own distinct techniques as of yet. The differences between the two expert pilots became a lot less pronounced as a result!

While Venerable Joshua still possessed numerous advantages as an expert pilot, Vincent did not feel as if he had no hopes of overpowering his sparring partner.

He was confident that his expert mech was superior to that of Joshua's!

The C-Man might not be as old as the Everchanger, but the former clearly displayed its superiority on a technical level.

"You can't run!" Vincent roared as his expert mech continually closed the distance to the Everchanger!

Still, the C-Man was having a harder and harder time of coping against the constant barrage of incoming attacks.

The power of a resonance shield was highly related to the resonance strength of the expert mech.

Not only that, but the damage inflicted by resonance-empowered attacks were also proportionate to the resonance strength of the expert pilot who launched them in the first place.

Joshua was significantly far ahead from Vincent in this regard! It couldn't be helped as the former had advanced considerably earlier and grown quite a bit with the help of a masterwork expert mech.

This advantage would have become a lot more pronounced if the Everchanger switched to firing light beams with its Vitalus rifle.

Sadly, Joshua wasn't allowed to demonstrate this rare but extremely effective firing mode, so he could only make do with positron beams at most!

While the C-Man's first layer of protection had grown awfully ragged as time went by, Venerable Vincent did not show any distress.

In any duel between expert mechs, the state of their resonance shields was an important indicator of their relative states.

The C-Man was already at a disadvantage due to its inability to retaliate from a distance!

Even so, Vincent did not pay attention to this at all. The only fact he cared about was that his expert mech was about to enter into striking range of the Everchanger!

"Your mech is pretty great, Joshua. I admit that I looked up to you and your machine for several years, but that is in the past. Now that I have caught up to you, I will show you who deserves to be the real golden boy of the Larkinson Clan!"

Even though there was still quite a few meters of distance between the two machines, the C-Man struck out with an arm that spontaneously elongated into an increasingly more narrow lance!

Empowered by true resonance, the remarkably sharp and deadly lance failed to penetrate the Everchanger's fresh and potent resonance shield.

The blow still managed to inflict a lot of damage, however!

The Everchanger and the C-Man continued to exchange blows against each other. Their resonance shields continued to flare and drain in cohesion as they endured repeated attacks.

It did not matter too much whether they were struck by energy beams or physical impacts. Damage was damage and there were limits to how much these reality-distorting fields could endure.

Predictably, the C-Man's resonance shield popped first!

Though the golden corona surrounding the newer expert faded first, the C-Man fearlessly withstood the follow-up attacks.

It was at this point where the new smart armor system showed its strength!

"You can do it, C-Man." Vincent grinned even as his mech got struck again and again. "We're invincible as long as we have our TESMAS!"

At this time, the C-Man only energized its TESMAS to a modest degree. This already granted the expert mech a notable amount of resistance against the incoming attacks at the cost of depleting its energy reserves faster.

The expert mech effortlessly withstood damage that should have at least left a mark onto other expert mechs!

"Fight me like a real man, Joshua!" Vincent called as his blood pumped hotter. "There's only one way for us to prove who is the better man on this field!"

"Fine, then! If you want a brawl, then come get it. Just don't cry if I kick your butt!"

The Everchanger decisively retracted and holstered its Vitalus rifle behind its back. The mech held its Heartsword in a two-handed grip so that it could add extra strength to its swing!

"Let me show you what my wife has taught me over the years!"

The hero mech's sword became surrounded by an ominous black corona as Venerable Joshua utilized the sword developed by Ketis to arouse the power of the Annihilator Sword Style!

Practically anything solid that got struck by such a deadly resonance manifestation would definitely suffer a grievous cut!

However, the C-Man fearlessly met the incoming attack by crossing its arms and pumping more energy to its frontal limbs.

As the nanomachines located in the limbs received more energy than ever before, the tiny but sophisticated devices stimulated the minute drops of phasewater that was present in some of them and produced a powerful spatial effect in front of the C-Man!

Clang!

Black and golden sparks spread from the impact site as an invisible spatial field that appeared just before the crossed arms.

The Everchanger did not give up and launched additional attacks in order to overcome the phasic defenses produced by the C-Man's expensive TESMAS.

Vincent became more and more ecstatic at how much damage his new expert mech could withstand!

"Hahaha! Don't you see? My resonance stuff might not be as good as yours, but my mech is all about the tech! Who cares about your Unending alloy when I have phasewater at my disposal? Let me show you what else I can do with my TESMAS!"

After staying on the defense for a time, the C-Man suddenly went on the offensive and started to launch punches despite getting struck by the Heartsword.

The C-Man showed no visible reaction to getting hit by the empowered sword because its energized smart armor easily blocked any incoming damage.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

The Everchanger was not as relaxed as the C-Man's energized fists continually pounded on its resonance shield.

The blows were not only fast, but also surprisingly powerful! Even though the energized TESMAS did not work on the same principles as true resonance, its power was not that weak in many aspects.

Phasewater was not a coveted material for nothing and the C-Man showed that the spatial effects produced by the TESMAS had caught up to the power of true resonance!

Many clever and knowledgeable observers developed a much greater interest in the new expert mech's smart armor system.

"This TESMAS is considerably more powerful than the other smart metal systems I came in touch with. I thought that the claims that it was capable of resisting attacks from expert mechs was exaggerated, but now I see that there may be merit to these claims."

"Can a mech piloted by low-ranking mech pilot finally put up a fair fight against an expert mech with this smart armor system?"

"Don't dream about it! Have you seen the price of this new armor system? You can commission an entire fleet carrier with how much phasewater it takes to equip a single mech!"

The realization that the C-Man essentially relied on an immense budget advantage to compete against the Everchanger dampened people's evaluation of Venerable Vincent a bit, but that did not mean that Vincent was irrelevant.

His fearlessness and courage rose to a new peak! He fully entrusted the defense of his mech to its TESMAS and completely focused on overpowering the Everchanger through brute force!

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

The C-Man's fists kept pounding against the Everchanger until the latter's resonance shield finally succumbed!

Though both expert mechs also possessed technological shield generators, neither of them bothered with activating these systems. They were much weaker and only delayed the inevitable as far as both mech pilots were concerned.

Instead, both Vincent and Joshua concentrated on applying as much damage to their targets!

The Everchanger no longer ran away but proactively dodged and weaved around as it sought to strike the slightly less agile C-Man from different angles.

For its own part, the C-Man did not let the Everchanger's movements stop it from landing its attacks.

The C-Man fully took advantage of its energized TESMAS by continually stretching out its limbs to strike at the Everchanger when the latter was supposed to be out of range.

Although the C-Man landed considerably heavy blows, the problem was that the Everchanger's defenses were absurdly strong even in the Red Ocean!

Only a rare number of expert mechs possessed stronger armor systems than the expert hero mech. The Unending alloy that Ves had lavished on most of his early expert mechs offered unparalleled defense, all without needing to be fed with electrical energy in order to sustain its properties!

Vincent grimaced though he wasn't particularly surprised at this outcome. It was hard to deal a heavy blow to the Everchanger as long as it kept moving around.

"If this is the case, then let me show you why my C-Man is the nemesis of melee mechs!"

Vincent completely abandoned his previous approach and switched over to a new combat strategy.

The C-Man's limbs suddenly lost shape as they became fluid and malleable. After Vincent issued another command, the stringy limbs shot forward and left no room for the Everchanger to escape the incoming nanomachines!

"The green mech got caught!"

There was no escape from the C-Man's capturing limbs at this distance!

Only one of the four tendrils of nanomachines had to latch on to the Everchanger's frame for the other three tendrils to quickly follow suit.

Now that the C-Man had caught hold of the Everchanger, it was extremely difficult for the latter to rid itself of these bonds.

Already, the energized TESMAS solidified and maintained a firm grip of its target.

Though the Everchanger attempted to remove the nanomachines by striking sections of them with its Heartsword, the outcome of these attacks were just as ineffectual as before.

"Damnit! What does it take for me to get rid of these nanomachines?! They're unkillable!"

As Joshua tried several different methods to free his expert mech from its new smart metal shackles, the C-Man slowly reeled its torso closer by shrinking its elongated limbs.

Venerable Vincent had only one problem, though.

The C-Man's limbs were all preoccupied. While the expert mech could take a risk and release one of its arms in order to launch repeated punches, why bother doing so when the C-Man still retained a free and unused limb?

Venerable Joshua's intuition suddenly alerted him to a terrible threat. As he checked his expert mech's rear sensors, he gradually noticed that the C-Man was in the process of 'arming' its 'third leg'.

"Oh hell no, Vincent. Don't do it, man."

"Hahaha! Why not? Your Everchanger is completely trapped and exposed. This is the perfect attack vector for this situation! I suggest you get ready, Joshua, because I'm about to launch my thrust attack!"

"OH HELL NO!"

Chapter 4099 The Pride of Men

Disgusted viewers turned away from this farcical-looking sight in disgust. Concerned mothers covered the eyes of their kids. The most ardent fans of Venerable Vincent and the C-Man leaned forward in order to get a better view of what was about to pass.

Now that the C-Man had entangled the Everchanger with all four of its smart metal limbs, its options had considerably narrowed.

Although the C-Man's nanomachines were cautiously spreading across the exterior of the expert mech in an attempt to burrow through any cracks in its armor, the problem was that the Everchanger still retained its full integrity.

There were no holes for the TESMAS to exploit and the Unending alloy armor plating was far too resilient for the nanomachines to drill through by employing physical force.

In fact, the most efficient way to overcome Unending alloy was to apply an immense amount of heat or energy damage, but it was a pity that the C-Man was only capable of inflicting physical attacks.

No matter. Vincent had committed to piloting a brawler mech because he believed that a strong enough punch could pierce through any defense!

"Unending alloy or not, my expert mech and I shall break your unbreakable armor!"

The C-Man conveyed Vincent's excitement to such an extent that the golden glow surrounding its frame and especially its fifth limb grew blindingly bright!

"LET MY CHARGE PIERCE THE HEAVENS!"

As the C-Man decisively propelled its torso towards the Everchanger's exposed rear with its flight system boosting it forward, everyone who was still watching this dramatic attack expected a collision of epic proportions to take place!

No one had ever seen an expert mech attack another expert mech by employing such an 'exotic' attack method!

However, Venerable Joshua and the Everchanger were not willing to let this come to pass. They had both been trying to escape the clutches of the C-Man in order to avoid the outcome that they dreaded the most!

Neither of them would complain if an enemy defeated them on the battlefield fair-and-square, but humiliating them in this manner went too far! There was no way that Venerable Joshua and the Everchanger could ever hold their backs straight in the presence of peers if they allowed the C-Man's dramatic attack to succeed!

Joshua finally couldn't hold himself back any longer and resonated with a design spirit that could best defend the innocence of his expert mech.

"Qilaxo! Give me a hand!"

The Everchanger began to grow brightly as an influx of multiple energies revived its resonance shield in advance.

A shiny green barrier appeared behind the back of the green expert mech just in time for the tip of the C-Man's sharp and deadly 'spear' to collide against the new obstacle!

This barrier proved to be so unassailable that the spear completely deformed moments before the rest of the torso of the C-Man smacked against the powerful barrier!

"Ah!" Vincent yelled as his frustrated C-Man fed back its pain.

As the attacking machine temporarily lost the initiative, the Everchanger glowed brightly in an attempt to extricate itself from its current predicament.

Both Venerable Joshua and the Everchanger were no longer willing to play as the foil for their opponents!

Although Joshua still recalled the instructions that Ves had given to him, he couldn't care about them anymore. His dignity and his reputation was more important than exposing one of the less known features of his expert mech.

As such, Joshua fully channeled the power of prime resonance as well as true resonance and blended the properties of the two together to produce an astonishing result!

Power and energy surged across the frame of the Everchanger. With a single blast, the immense waves of resonance power forcibly shoved aside the nanomachines that kept the expert hero mech in the C-Man's clutches!

Now freed from its bondage, the Everchanger blasted forward and built up some much-needed distance from the C-Man.

Venerable Joshua had learned his lesson and understood that it was too tricky to fight against the latest Larkinson expert mech at closer ranges.

"I won't let you get close again!" He yelled as his Everchanger brought out its Vitalus rifle again and fired at the C-Man.

"Hah! My mech is faster than yours! If I can catch up to you once, I can do so again!"

The C-Man proceeded to do exactly that. The flight speeds between the two mechs were not the same at all. The newer expert mech's tech advantage was too significant and The Everchanger was unable to flee as fast as possible if it wanted to fire back.

Yet just as the C-Man launched out its stretchy limbs in order to perform the same move as before, the Everchanger's resonance shield firmly blocked the nanomachines from grappling onto its limbs again.

Vincent did not take this hindrance too seriously. He commanded the C-Man to go back to launching a continuous flurry of punches in order to wear out the Everchanger's revived defenses.

However, the problem this time was that the expert hero mech was able to sustain its defenses considerably longer than before.

Not only that, but the Everchanger also adopted a trickier evasive pattern that was no longer centered around opening up more distance from the pursuing expert brawler mech.

Instead, Venerable Joshua commanded his expert mech to make more lateral movements, thereby allowing the Everchanger to sidestep the C-Man to a much greater degree.

As a more bulky and armored machine, one of the relative shortcomings of the C-Man was its inability to turn on the fly!

Venerable Vincent became more and more frustrated at his expert mech's extended punches and grabs either missed the mark or bumped into a seemingly indestructible energy barrier.

"You little bastard." Venerable Vincent cursed as his expert mech failed to make any progress for the time being. "You're cheating. You promised not to employ any of that prime resonance crap."

"Well, excuse me for employing a core feature of my expert mech. I don't see you holding back when it comes to showing off the power of your TESMAS." Venerable Joshua unapologetically replied.

"That's because this duel is also meant to showcase the new smart armor system! How can I help increase its sales if I don't prove that it is effective in battles between expert mechs?"

"If I don't make use of my own expert mech's strong points, your C-Man won't be able to show off the full capabilities of its TESMAS. You should thank me for putting up a good fight!"

Neither of the two Larkinson expert pilots wanted to admit defeat towards each other.

Although Venerable Joshua was one of the more easygoing expert pilots of the Larkinson Clan, his pride and competitive drive were not light.

He no longer looked down on Vincent and the C-Man and took this fight extremely seriously.

The Everchanger became more active than ever as it cooperated with Joshua to adopt a more effective combat approach than before.

By focusing on launching persistent attacks while evading every possible attack run, the older expert mech successfully frustrated Vincent's attempts to capture it again.

Minutes passed by as the C-Man was left with launching long-ranged punches that were inevitably weaker and less damaging due to how far the smart metal arms needed to stretch in order to land a blow on the elusive Everchanger.

By resonating with Qilanxo that he had built a good relationship with, Venerable Joshua was able to keep his Everchanger shielded for a considerably longer time than normal.

Many knowledgeable mech insiders and observers could clearly tell that the effective defensive power of the Everchanger exceeded the level of an expert mech of its size.

"I thought the brawler mech was already strong enough, but the hero mech is not that bad either."

"How is the green mech able to block so many attacks? I thought hero mechs were supposed to be weak when it comes to defense."

"It's not just the performance of the hero mech that is catching up. The pilot has also become a lot more serious!"

After his recent scare, Venerable Joshua no longer treated this as an ordinary sparring session and show match.

He fought as if Vincent was a terrible opponent and that the C-Man was one step away from humiliating the Everchanger.

As Joshua continued to fight more seriously, he began to show an increasing amount of skills and techniques that he had developed over the last year.

He took considerable advantage of the fact that he had practiced with his expert mech for a longer amount of time by displaying more advanced tricks and moves.

Even though a hero mech did not possess that much of an advantage against a brawler mech at closer ranges, the Everchanger had become so slippery that the C-Man achieved little progress during this phase of the battle!

The much more unrestricted duel between the two expert mech turned into a battle of attrition of sorts.

The C-Man undoubtedly remained a great threat, but the cost of energizing its TESMAS was so considerable that the mech started to emanate more heat!

At the same time, the Everchanger's enhanced resonance shield was reaching its limits as Venerable Joshua found it increasingly harder to maintain his connection with Qilanxo in the face of repeated attacks.

"I told you, Joshua! Since I can break your defenses once, I can do so again!"

After pumping additional energy into the fists of the C-Man, the expert brawler mech slammed forth its limbs like hammers!

BANG!

The twin impacts not only broke the resonance barrier that had proven to be quite effective at blocking the C-Man's prior attacks, but also generated a small explosion that caused both mechs to back away from each other.

The Everchanger charged up its Vitalus rifle and fired off a powerful kinetic beam attack that blew back the C-Man even further while inducing considerable stress on the TESMAS.

"Your mech is vulnerable again!" Vincent crowed as he drove his brawler mech forward again.

The C-Man glowed brightly as the expert mech charged in like a flying superhero.

There was no way that Vincent wanted the Everchanger to slip away again!

However, just as the C-Man was about to collide against the Everchanger, the latter held its Heartsword in two hands and made an empowered sword strike that unleashed a wave of sword energy that partially succeeded in cutting through the incoming fists!

This interrupted the C-Man's attack to such an extent that the Everchanger was quickly able to turn a powerful head-on impact into a weaker glancing blow.

Bang!

Though the Everchanger's frame still rang from the impact, the mech was still in decent shape.

The C-Man on the other hand had already reformed its limbs and made itself whole again. However, heat continued to radiate from its frame as its high-intensity exertions rapidly caused the machine to deplete its energy reserves.

Though Vincent knew he could prolong his C-Man's operation time by resonating with the Marneium that was integrated with his expert mech, he knew better than to do so at this time.

"I still need to hide a few trump cards of my own." He muttered.

Besides, Vincent didn't think he needed to resort to this measure in order to win the current duel!

"Get ready, Joshua! This will be my final move!" He shouted over the private communication channel.

"Heh, you're not the only one who wants to end this fight. Take my sword!"

The Everchanger did not make any evasive moves this time but charged straight forward while its Heartsword glowed with increasing cutting potential.

The C-Man on the other hand made a completely different move by swinging back an arm that rapidly grew in size.

The expert brawler mech transferred a lot of its nanomachines away from its other limbs in order to unleash its singular most powerful punch to date!

Many viewers who had been watching from the beginning or joined in at a later date held still as they waited to see whether the flamboyant new expert brawler mech would be able to overpower its foe this time.

As the two expert mechs glowed brighter, they closed in on each other with single-minded determination and struck at the same time!

BOOM!

Chapter 4100 PR Machine

The collision between two expert mechs as they unleashed their strongest attacks during the duel produced a massive resonance-fueled explosion that temporarily blinded every sensor!

The willpower and resonance of two different Larkinson expert pilots chaotically blended and collided against each other, causing reality to become a lot less orderly around the collision site.

Many viewers looked eagerly to see which of the two impressive Larkinson expert mechs managed to gain the upper hand this time.

As the dust began to settle and the manifestations of will began to subside, two expert mechs hovered a short distance from each other.

"They're damaged!"

"Wow! This fight was a lot more real than I expected!"

"Which of the expert mechs have won!?"

Neither mechs came out of the exchange of blows unscathed.

The C-Man visibly looked worse off. Venerable Joshua had not been holding back as he channeled the sword style imbued in the Heartsword.

Together with the persistent teachings of his wife, Joshua was able to maximize the cutting power of his sword attack.

The result was obvious as the C-Man had lost one of its arms!

A clean cut ran through what was left of its upper arm!

This was a serious blow. While the C-Man's severed limb was already floating back and merged itself back together like a living entity, the cutting attack had done more than to separate one group of nanomachines from another group of nanomachines.

The arm of the C-Man was not completely fluid. It contained a few solid components that provided extra structure and control to the arm. Now that they had been cut, it was not so easy to make them whole again.

Though Venerable Vincent could force his C-Man to resume fighting with its reattached limb, it did not change the fact that the damaged expert mech needed workshop time in order to regain its full combat effectiveness.

Vincent tiredly grinned. Although his C-Man had suffered a serious blow, his mech at least managed to strike a blow in return!

Much to the astonishment of the Larkinsons who had a better idea of the Everchanger's properties, its entire upper left section looked deformed.

The C-Man's final punch may have partially been interrupted by the Everchanger's amputation strike, but the power of its fist that was empowered by Vincent's strong will and desire to win could not be denied so easily!

Still, no matter how astonishing it was to inflict enough force to dent solid Unending alloy armor plating, the Everchanger still retained most of its battle effectiveness.

"It looks like the power of technology is not enough for you to win this duel." Joshua remarked as he recovered from his previous exertion.

Venerable Joshua calmly activated a resonance ability that steadily regenerated the Everchanger's damaged components and even restored the damaged armor plating back to their original shapes!

It was nearly impossible to accomplish this unless extremely advanced technology was involved, but the ability to recover the integrity of the mech frame was second nature to Venerable Joshua and the Everchanger.

It was difficult to defeat the Everchanger as long as the expert mech wasn't taken out in a single blow!

A tense silence followed as both expert pilots kept an eye on each other's expert mechs.

The surging true resonance of the two powerful machines showed that Joshua and Vincent were more than willing to go for another round.

However, before they could think about doing so, Gloriana's voice rudely interrupted their ongoing confrontation.

"Alright! That is enough! Both of you have done a good job. We have collected more than enough data on the C-Man to evaluate its soundness and construct a basic model of its battle performance."

"I can still fight, ma'am!" Vincent stated as he found it difficult to stop at this point.

It was so enjoyable for him to let loose like this! His expert mech was just begging to win its first proper victory against a formidable opponent.

"Your expert mech is running high on heat and low on resources." Gloriana factually stated.

"I can still do more! I haven't even activated the new Heat Conversion resonating ability yet. Let me test it out right away so that you can gather even more combat data on the C-Man."

"We are not in a hurry to collect more data, Venerable Vincent. We already held a discussion with you on this. While we do not mind exposing the combat capabilities of the C-Man, it is not necessary for us to expose this feature to the public. Even if you are able to convert all of the excess heat into a usable charge, your expert mech's performance will not exceed the level you have already shown. Whether you can defeat the Everchanger or not is inconsequential."

"What about the broadcast?"

"The reaction from our growing audience is more than satisfactory."

As much as Vincent wanted to pursue the victory he craved, this was not a fight to the death nor a duel where victory had to be accomplished at all cost.

It was a show match, one that was meant to build up the credentials of the Larkinson Clan and draw public attention to the C-Man.

The Larkinsons succeeded in attaining these goals.

Word of mouth about the Larkinson Clan and its fantastic expert mechs had spread explosively!

While it wasn't really that important to the clan whether people from the old galaxy or from distant places in the Red Ocean learned about the Larkinsons in advance, it was different for its main target audience.

Tens of millions of colonists who resided in Davute and other surrounding star systems such as Makairo developed a strong impression of the Larkinson Clan.

The tech and power demonstrated by its two expert mechs were both impressive and awe-inspiring!

Not only that, but the themes and the design concepts of the two mechs attracted a lot of admiration from the public.

While the Everchanger hadn't been able to showcase its full strength this time due to many limitations, the C-Man's performance successfully won over a lot of viewers!

These mech fanatics and other people became charmed by the C-Man's unapologetic masculinity and its physical fighting approach.

"This is a real man's mech."

"Why isn't the LMC selling more hypermasculine mechs? I want a machine that looks just like this expert mech!"

"The 'C' in C-Man stands for Champion!"

The buzz surrounding the C-Man continued to rise even after the Larkinsons announced the end of the show match.

The Everchanger retreated and disappeared from view, allowing the partially recovered C-Man to command all of the attention.

The C-Man did not look worse off from the battle at all. In fact, the heat sizzling from its overheated frame made it look powerful and dangerous in a way that excited both men and women.

Since most of the viewers who disliked the C-Man had already turned away from the broadcast, the tens of millions of people that had continued to watch up to this point developed overwhelmingly positive opinions about the new expert mech.

Of those viewers, the majority of them simply thought that the C-Man was strong and featured interesting new tech.

A smaller proportion of them were more ardent in their appreciation of the C-Man. They dreamt of piloting the expert mech themselves or wished to acquire a more accessible mech that fought in a similar fashion.

It was these mech fanatics and superfans that played the biggest role at this point!

The C-Man's existence and impressive showing had stimulated these admirers to such a degree that they actually began to display behavior that was awfully similar to worship.

At least at this time, the C-Man had become an idol that they felt compelled to worship as an existence that was more than just an expert mech.

The mech fanatics began to worship the C-Man as if it was a god.

Of course, their behavior was not overtly religious. They appreciated the C-Man as a mech and not as a living deity. Yet the distinction was not important as their intensity and their devotion towards the expert brawler mech had surpassed a certain threshold.

Invisible to anyone except a select few individuals, the divine markers integrated in each individual component of the C-Man began to absorb the spiritual feedback generated by many devoted fans.

Though the energy they passed on without their knowing was weak, the quantity of feedback was still respectable.

Gloriana observed the projected feed of the C-Man closely.

It was difficult for her to examine what was truly taking place, but her instincts told her that the C-Man was likely evolving its physical form at a faster pace than usual!

"I need to examine my work right away!" She gasped!

The show came to an end. The broadcast ended shortly after Ves held a short speech, leaving many viewers excited and hungry for more.

Hours later, the Larkinsons at the training field returned to the Cat Nest. While other clansmen handled the aftermath of the public testing session, a couple of people had gathered in the secure workshop room where Gloriana personally repaired the fixed battle damage of her expert mech.

"There!" Gloriana happily announced. "The C-Man is completely restored. Your expert mech has regained full functionality of its arm."

Venerable Vincent nodded his head in appreciation. "Thank you for what you have done, madame. I can already feel my expert mech is hungry for a rematch against the Everchanger."

Ves uttered a cough. "You will have to wait a few days as we aren't ready to hold another testing session soon. We need to do this step by step. While it may feel to you that the C-Man is completely fine, it is better to be careful and systematically test its performance so that we can be sure that it will not malfunction in battle. We still have a lot of questions with regards to the TESMAS utilized by your expert mech. It is a customized version of Professor Almar's original product and has incorporated many changes. We need to understand exactly how its performance has been affected before we feel comfortable fielding the C-Man once again. We already took a considerable risk in allowing you to fight with it in front of a huge crowd."

The expert pilot looked disappointed. Although he was the closest partner to the C-Man, he ultimately did not own the expert mech. It was property of the Larkinson Clan which meant that Vincent had to wait for instructions from above if he wanted to pilot his new battle partner.

"I will look forward to the next testing session, then."

"Don't get too excited, Vincent. You had your fun this time but we still need to gather systematic data on the C-Man's many performance indicators. We only allowed you to take part in a show match because we needed to play to the crowd."

"What? You're not going to show off my expert mech again?"

"Not until we have done our due diligence and cleared the C-Man for serious combat operations."

"That will take too long! You can't leave my expert mech in the dark for too long. The fans we've created will forget about me and my C-Man if we don't show up again after a while."

Gloriana walked up to the two men and interrupted them. "Vincent has a point, Ves. We should still conduct the necessary tests, but we should also find more opportunities to display the C-Man in public. We don't have to hold more show matches. We can start a PR campaign that can simultaneously promote our clan, our expanding product catalog as well as the C-Man itself. We will be able to hit three birds with a single stone with this approach!"

"That... makes sense, but only if we are okay with allowing the C-Man to become an iconic symbol of the Larkinson Clan." Ves slowly replied. "You know how the public has reacted to our latest work. The C-Man is a polarizing and divisive mech! It's too masculine!"

"I don't see a problem with that, Ves. We have plenty of mechs that are neutral and feminine. As long as we display our other products alongside the C-Man, we can appeal to a wider group of people! I am certain we can generate a lot of interest in our Hexer mechs!"

" ... "