

## Mech 4251

### Chapter 4251 Nidin Vergers

The Flagrant Vandals predominantly fielded four different mech models this time.

The Fridaymen already possessed a detailed understanding of the properties of the Ferocious Piranha Mark III.

As one of the bestselling models of the Larkinson Clan, the Friday Coalition easily managed to get their hands on enough models and decipher all of their strengths and weaknesses.

The Sundered Phalanx also possessed a basic understanding of the Stingripper model that the Larkinsons occasionally utilized in many mercenary missions over the years.

The Fridaymen did not know the Light Hunter model that well, but it shouldn't matter too much considering it was a scout mech.

Yet once they finally started to exchange blows against the Larkinson mechs, the Nidin Vergers soon discovered that fighting against this combination of mechs was far more troublesome than what they trained for during their own simulation training sessions!

"My shots aren't hitting the annoying Stingrippers!"

"Are you blind?! Your aim was off by over 20 meters!"

"I can't concentrate on the Stingrippers when these annoying Ferocious Piranhas are buzzing me with their disorienting glows!"

Although the basic battle lineup of the Flagrant Vandals remained fairly simple by centering almost entirely on the Ferocious Piranhas and the Stingrippers, the synergy they produced in battle was an extremely successful formula!

Despite their training and preparation, the Fridaymen who encountered the signature mechs of the Flagrant Vandals found that their special preparations did not adequately prepare them for the real thing.

They were experiencing a lot more difficulties when fighting against the Flagrant Vandals.

This was an inconceivable result to the Fridaymen soldiers.

The mech pilots of the Nidin Vergers weren't rookies!

Many of them were veterans of the Komodo War. Those that had been recruited in the mech division after the conclusion of the war received focused training and guidance from those veterans in order to close the gap as much as possible.

As the two sides continued to fight against each other, it became clearer to the Fridaymen why the disparity was so great.

Their technical piloting skills weren't too far apart. The Sundered Phalanx had always been good at maintaining high training standards. Its more elite mech divisions received substantially greater resources in order to transform them into crack troops that could deal with the worst that the Hexers could throw in their direction!

The Flagrant Vandals along with the rest of the Larkinson Army was not much worse in this regard.

Although the Larkinson Army was not as comprehensive as the Sundered Phalanx, the clan poured a lot more money into raising the skills and proficiencies of its individual mech pilots.

This still wasn't enough to explain the differences, though.

As the Fridaymen officers and the analysts continued to study the performance of the Flagrant Vandals mechs, they took special note of how

well the mech pilots adjusted to the movements and the combat tactics of the Nidin Vergers.

"None of our tactics are working against these Larkinson bastards."

"It's as if they are reading us like an open book!"

"Sometimes I get the impression that these Larkinsons know my Remo Targ better than me! Damn, my mech is crippled! Ejecting!"

Although the Glory Seekers and the Crossers were able to read their opponents fairly well, the familiarity exhibited by the Larkinsons was on another level!

Commander Abis Firelight did not look overly surprised at this result.

"All of that time spent in the MSTS is worth it. Training with the help of a much more realistic simulation program makes a huge difference."

It wasn't just the mech pilots that gained a lot of 'experience' by conducting targeted training against specific opponents such as the Nidin Vergers.

Even the living mechs themselves got pulled into the MSTS!

This allowed the mech and mech pilot to develop a deeper level of synergy and cooperation in combat.

Combined with the new deep exchange technology introduced by the rather odd Cormaunt Hempkamp, the mech pilots of the Larkinson Clan mastered their own living battle partners to a significantly greater degree than their opponents!

The difference in familiarity and deep proficiency simply made the Larkinson mech pilots better.

The fact that the Nidin Vergers had been thrown off their comfort zone and were scrambling to adapt to this unexpected circumstance was an additional bonus that widened the disparity in performance.

In fact, Commander Firelight believed that even if the mech pilots from both sides performed identical to each other, his Flagrant Vandals still would have been able to obtain an advantage!

The main reason why he felt confident?

"Our mechs are simply better!"

The Flagrant Vandals might not have been as numerous as the elements of the Hex Army at the flanks, but the damage they inflicted onto the opposing mechs was considerably more impressive in both relative and absolute terms!

Whereas the Hex Army's light mechs mostly danced around and only sporadically managed to damage their targets, the Flagrant Vandals were much more productive!

The Ferocious Piranhas and the Stingrippers not only landed their blows with much greater regularity, but knew exactly what parts of the enemy mechs to target in order to achieve maximum effect!

The Nidin Verger mech pilots began to feel more and more distressed as they felt increasingly more exposed.

They could cope against the units of the Hex Army.

They could stall the Crossers and the Glory Seekers by fighting more defensively than usual.

It was only when they fought against the Flagrant Vandals that they were getting torn to pieces!

No matter what formations they utilized and what kind of coordinated tactics they pulled off, as long as their squads were targeted by both the Ferocious

Piranha and the Stingripper, the enemy mech pilots simply failed to measure up against the Larkinson mechs!

"What does it take to shoot you down!?"

A Nidin Verger piloting a Remo Targ mech gritted his teeth as he did his best to resist the persistent glow from a nearby Ferocious Piranha.

As a soldier of the Sundered Phalanx, the pilot received a lot of training on how to resist glows.

Though the glow from the Ferocious Piranha strained his mind a lot, his firm training allowed him to resist the effect.

The problem was that regardless of what he was doing, he would always be fighting with a handicap!

With a part of his mind focused on retaining his wits, he had less focus left on tracking his enemies and plotting his next moves.

The weakness of the Remo Targ design became evident in this fight.

While it was capable of getting close and cutting vulnerable opponents down with its light sword, it was difficult for the mech to win a duel against a Ferocious Piranha Mark III!

Although the Larkinson light skirmisher was available on the market, the model employed by the Flagrant Vandals was a variant!

After all, most commercial parties simply couldn't afford to spend so much on individual light mechs.

Only a few groups were willing to splurge on quality light mechs like the Larkinson Clan!

The Design Department not only raised the specifications of the Ferocious Piranha Mark III, but also added other minor Larkinson-exclusive enhancements to the design.

All of this meant that the Ferocious Piranha was deadlier, tougher and even a little bit faster than the Remo Targ!

In a pure melee bout, this meant that the Ferocious Piranha could defeat the Remo Targ at least 70 percent of the time!

It took the Remo Targs their utmost to fend off the Ferocious Piranhas and preserve their integrity.

The problem with that was that it left the accompanying Stingrippers plenty of opportunity to fire at the Remo Targs with their luminar crystal submachine guns.

Different from luminar crystal rifles that were usually optimized for delivering powerful penetrating shots, the submachine guns that Ves had designed for this model were able to fire beams at an impressively high rate.

Even though the penetration and power of these energy beams were anything but impressive, they were more than powerful enough to chip away at the armor of light mechs!

The Remo Targs simply couldn't get rid of the tracking of the Stingrippers. The fast firing rate made it a lot easier to achieve at least some hits.

Theoretically, the Remo Targs should have been able to stop the Stingrippers by catching up to them or firing back with their rapid-fire pulse carbines.

In practice, the Stingrippers were so fast and light that it was too difficult for the Remo Targs to catch up to the annoying Larkinson mechs!

The Remo Targs could easily slice the Stingrippers if they could slash their targets with their light swords, but when it came to combat between light mechs, speed was often king!

Therefore, the only other way for the Remo Targs to destroy the Stingrippers was to exchange fire with their ranged weapons.

It was a pity that the Remo Targs were not only armed with a weaker ranged weapon model, but couldn't even reliably land a hit on the Stingrippers!

"How can these Stingrippers be so difficult to hit?!"

"You need to concentrate extra hard on them! Don't rely on your instincts and muscle training. The Stingrippers exist to fool your judgment!"

The Gauge Dynasty was not ignorant about the properties of the Stingrippers, but it was a pity that knowing about them was different from fighting against them on a real battlefield.

No virtual simulation training system could ever prepare the Sundered Phalanx mech pilots against the glows of both the Ferocious Piranhas and the Stingrippers at the same time!

It was already awful enough for the opponents of the Flagrant Vandals to deal with one suppressive glow.

Adding another on top of that created so many weaknesses that the Nidin Verger mech pilots assigned to fight against the Flagrant Vandals were almost driven to despair!

"We can't fight against these demons by ourselves! We need backup!"

"We can't! We already have our hands full resisting the other Hexer mechs. Don't aim for a victory. Just do your best to block the Larkinson mechs and we'll finish them off later."

"At this rate, we won't last long enough to prevent them from overrunning our other mech units! We need backup at this instant!"

The officers of the Sundered Phalanx tried various measures to block the Flagrant Vandals from running free.

The Nidin Vergers received fire support from the rear when the ranged mechs of the Blackened Reapers opened fire on the Flagrant Vandals.

Unfortunately, their support had less than the desirable effect!

Though the Blackened Reapers had a reputation for precision and accuracy, it was too difficult for them to take down light mechs at a distance, especially when they were fast, high-quality machines under the control of well-trained mech pilots!

The Fridaymen deployed other units in response. The Nidin Vergers along with other units sent a whole host of different mechs at the Flagrant Vandals in order to break their combination.

Nothing really worked!

The Nidin Verger light skirmishers couldn't catch up to the Ferocious Piranhas and the Stingrippers and mostly got ripped apart by the latter if they persisted in their chase.

The striker mechs dispatched by another Sundered Phalanx mech division could easily roast a lot of light mechs with their formidable flamethrowers, but their mobility deficit was so high that they could never even catch up to their targets.

In desperation, the Nidin Vergers redirected hundreds of mechs away from their current opponents and threw them onto the Flagrant Vandals in order to crush the annoying Larkinson mechs through numbers.

While the Flagrant Vandals indeed came under a lot of suppression, the problem was that the Hexer light mechs suddenly became unleashed and started to gain a lot more advantages against their remaining opponents!

"Damnit, we can't go on like this, ma'am! If we don't obtain relief in two minutes, then our squads will begin to collapse. Forget about holding back. Send in Dukes! Wait, send in Hawkes as well."

"Understood. Please stand by for further instructions."



"We won't be alive anymore if we wait any longer!"

### **Chapter 4252 Dukes And Hawkes**

The Sundered Phalanx officers recognized that they could not cope against the Flagrant Vandals through normal means anymore.

What they needed was an outside factor, and after a brief delay, the higher-ups finally pulled the trigger!

As the Ferocious Piranhas and the Stingrippers continued to team up and abuse their opponents by shamelessly taking advantage of their suppressive glows, the Light Hunters that kept a close eye on this section of the battlefield began to detect alarming indications!

"We're detecting the approach of an expert mech, no, two expert mechs!"

"DISPERSE!"

The Flagrant Vandal mechs immediately suspended their current routines and flew apart from each other in response to the incoming threats, but the Fridayman expert mechs arrived a lot faster than expected!

Surrounded by the tell-tale bubbles of warp travel, two expert light mechs hailing from the Nidin Vergers blasted onto the scene and immediately chopped and shot apart a dozen Flagrant Vandal mechs shortly after they arrived!

Even though it was completely unnecessary, the new arrivals did not hesitate to fully resonate with their transphasic weapons.

This allowed the deadly light expert mechs to completely treat the Flagrant Vandal mechs as air!

The slaughter of so many Larkinson mechs at once immediately lifted the morale of Nidin Vergers and other nearly Sundered Phalanx mech pilots.

No matter their training and experience, they had inevitably lost their confidence after getting repeatedly abused by the Flagrant Vandals.

Many of them were cognizant enough to figure out that if they failed to stop the Flagrant Vandal mechs, the Larkinson mechs would soon be able to trigger a catastrophic cascade at this flank!

Once the Hex Army and the Golden Skull Alliance took complete control of this side, they could immediately reinforce other friendly units or put so much pressure on the exposed ranged mechs in the rear that many Sundered Phalanx mech units would lose their fire support!

This was why the Nidin Verger mech pilots immediately regained their hope. As long as their expert mechs managed to break the backs of the Flagrant Vandals, they were confident enough in their ability to handle the other enemy mech units!

They even began to chant the names of their war heroes!

"Dukes and Hawkes! Dukes and Hawkes! Dukes and Hawkes!"

Venerable Osaia Dukes and Venerable Kismet Hawkes went a long way back. They had both been unremarkable low-tier expert pilots from before the Komodo War.

Back then, they had been attached to another mech division. They participated in many battles, some of which had been so large and destructive that the units that they had been a part of often had to retreat and reorganize due to all of the losses that they had suffered!

Somehow, Venerable Dukes and Venerable Hawkes managed to stay together and steadily forge a deeper understanding and cooperation with each other.

By the time the Komodo War neared its ending, Dukes and Hawkes had become one of the more notable duos among their kind!

Once the war had ended, the two applied to transfer to the Red Ocean early. They soon moved to the Friday Colonies where they gained a fresh start as the protectors assigned to the 6161th Nidin Vergers.

After witnessing so many mechs of this mech division getting abused by the Flagrant Vandals, Dukes and Hawkes had long grown furious at the Larkinsons!

"Let us show these bastards that they are nothing without their glows!" Venerable Osaia Dukes roared as his eyes practically turned red!

He finally saw an opportunity to punish the Larkinson Clan for inventing glows and providing this capability to the Hex Army.

So many good Fridayman soldiers had perished during the Komodo War, and 'living' mechs such as the infamous Valkyrie Redeemer carried much of the blame!

"Don't lose sight of our true foes, Dukes." Venerable Kismet Hawkes warned as her light harasser mech needled the Stingrippers to death with its thin kinetic rifle. "There's a nearby Larkinson expert mech that is not looking so friendly at the moment."

"Hah, it's just a single expert light skirmisher. What can it do on its own? We will beat it even if it brings a friend!"

Venerable Osaia Dukes might be brash, but he had reason to be confident. He and his fellow expert pilot had combined forces against Hexer expert mechs many times in the past.

Most of the time, they came out on top due to their individual skills as well as their intimate teamwork!

The bond they developed between each other had been forged in the fires of war. Ordinary pairs of enemy expert mechs could not shake them anymore!

Confident in their superiority, the Quadknife piloted by Venerable Dukes and the Filamon piloted by Venerable Hawkes acted like wolves among sheep!

The famed glows of the Ferocious Piranha and the Stingripper that could easily torment the minds of almost any mech pilot became completely ineffective when they tried to exert their influence on the enemy expert pilots.

The reason for that was that the glows originated from Zeigra, Lufa, Qilanxo and Kalo. Each spiritual entity existed at a higher level than ordinary people, so they could naturally impose their auras onto the weak.

Expert pilots had already undergone one major evolution and substantially closed the gap as a result.

Not only that, expert pilots especially transformed their willpower, making it extraordinarily powerful and resilient.

Not even gods could shake their convictions!

In fact, it didn't even matter whether the Ferocious Piranhas and Stingrippers lost their main gimmicks. Expert pilots were so far ahead that they could still wipe out the Larkinson mechs even if their combat effectiveness had dropped by 75 percent!

Commander Abis Firelight and many other Larkinson officers already knew in advance that the pair of mid-range expert mechs could not be defeated through normal means.

"Tusa." Commander Firelight opened a communication channel to the Dark Zephyr. "The Cross Clan is dispatching Venerable Imaris Cross to our boys. If you can wait 45 seconds, you can team up with him to fight against Dukes and Hawkes."

"Don't!" Venerable Tusa Billingsley-Larkinson surprisingly contradicted the legion commander. "I can take care of them by myself. So what if they're the famed Dukes and Hawkes duo? Even without sparring against their simulated expert mechs hundreds of times, I can beat them in my sleep! Tell Imaris to keep supporting his fellow Crossers. We Larkinsons can take care of our business!"

Though Commander Firelight had serious misgivings about Tusa's judgment, it was too late to persuade the light mech specialist to hang back because the Dark Zephyr already charged towards the Filamon!

Since the Dark Zephyr Version 2.0 had equipped its exclusive Morton Tech Stiletto AS-1 Combat Drive before deploying into the field, the first Larkinson expert mech possessed warp travel capabilities.

This allowed it to close a lot of distance in a short amount of time, enabling the expert light skirmisher to get into kill range in record time!

However, long before the Dark Zephyr was able to sink its daggers through the frame of the Filamon, the Nidin Verger expert mech flew straight backwards while engaging its transphasic flight system, thereby significantly increasing the time it took for both mechs to meet each other!

Venerable Kismet Hawkes did not choose to retreat, though. She actively attempted to string along the Dark Zephyr so that her Filamon could fire at the Larkinson expert mech with greater ease!

As a light harasser mech, the Filamon was a ranged expert mech developed by Master Xeona Reizen and Master Alex Canre.

Master Reizen's main input was equipping the Filamon with a new cutting-edge stutter flight system. This innovative mobility solution that not only allowed the expert mech to pull off impressive stutter evasion moves, but also do so while engaging in warp travel!

Master Alex Canre on the other hand was known for his specialization in physical ranged weapons. He took a particular interest in developing smaller and lighter kinetic arms for mechs that didn't have the capacity to carry heavier weapons.

In fact, the name of the Filamon was derived from its unique filament rifle. The kinetic weapon worked similar to a gauss rifle, but instead of shooting kinetic rounds that were designed to punch through armor through brute force, the filament rifle fired thin spikes that dealt much less damage per hit but still retained a lot of penetration power.

The main advantage of the filament rifle was that its firing rate and ammunition capacity was much higher than any equivalent gauss weapon!

Venerable Kismet Hawkes did not feel any distress as her expert mech pumped out hundreds of razor-thin filaments into space.

Most of them didn't even hit anything as the Dark Zephyr proved to be remarkably difficult to hit even to a veteran expert pilot!

Still, Kismet Hawkes was not only a war veteran that had fought against many challenging opponents, but also received an intelligence briefing on the Dark Zephyr.

While the current incarnation of the Dark Zephyr looked a lot different from the records that Hawkes had studied, it should still cling to the same concept.

She already knew about the Dark Zephyr's strange optical illusion trick and did not attempt to land all of her shots at the apparent location and trajectory of the enemy expert mech.

The Dark Zephyr that she was able to observe through her mech was a deception!

The actual coordinates of the Dark Zephyr should be close to its apparent location, and could vary a lot as Venerable Tusa constantly wanted to keep his opponents guessing.

The only way to put serious pressure on the Dark Zephyr when it had activated its Untouchable triggered ability was to saturate the surrounding space with a lot of attacks.

This was exactly what the Filamon excelled at! With the help of her powerful and developed intuition, Venerable Hawkes managed to put a lot of pressure on the Dark Zephyr's resonance shield in a short amount of time!

Even so, the Dark Zephyr was still gaining speed! It would not take long for the powerful Larkinson expert mech to close the distance and return all of the damage it endured and more.

"Dukes!"

"On it, Hawkes!"

The Filamon smoothly turned into an arc even as it continued to accelerate backwards at an impressive pace while keeping the Dark Zephyr under fire.

Just as the Dark Zephyr came close enough to toss a grenade at the expert light harasser mech, Tusa abruptly had to turn his machine by 135 degrees and lift up its daggers in order to repel a charge attack launched by the Quadknife!

The Dark Zephyr smoothly managed to block two of the incoming knife stabs, but as its name suggested, the Quadknife did not possess two arms, but four!

Venerable Tusa was already aware of this and had already attempted to jerk his Dark Zephyr to the side.

His expert mech succeeded in evading the third knife strike, but the fourth knife managed to get through unimpeded!

The resonance shield surrounding the Dark Zephyr flared as it blocked this powerful charge attack.

Venerable Tusa had to abandon his attempt to run down the Filamon in order to handle its new opponent.

This was because Venerable Osaia Dukes did not let up on his new target! After succeeding in landing at least one attack, the Quadknife seemed to smell blood and continued to launch a flurry of attacks with all four arms!

Though the Quadknife's attacks were no longer as painful due to lack of momentum, the attack speed of its arms were so high that it was as if the Dark Zephyr was fighting against a literal storm of knives!

The Dark Zephyr may be able to comfortably block two of the arms of its opponents in a duel, but four of them were beyond its capacity!

If that wasn't bad enough, the Filamon had already circled around and put consistent pressure against the Dark Zephyr's resonance shield by shooting at its exposed back!

Had Tusa bitten off more than he could chew?

### **Chapter 4253 Quadknife**

"This expert mech is tougher than it looks." Venerable Osaia Dukes snarled as his Quadknife continued to wail on the Dark Zephyr. "The Larkinsons have far too much money on their hands!"

Venerable Kismet Hawkes twitched her lips as her Filamon continued to pepper the Dark Zephyr's rear with as many filaments as it could land.

"Isn't that a given, Dukes? The Larkinsons are war profiteers. They have forsaken their loyalties to their original states and have thrown away all of their morals, all for the sake of enriching themselves through the suffering of our people. I don't know why they have grown arrogant enough to think they can beat us directly this time, but I see this as a blessing in disguise. As long as



we eliminate the Dark Zephyr, we can break one of the important arms of the Larkinson Clan!"

"We can do more than that, Hawkes." Venerable Dukes replied even as his Quadknife continued to overwhelm the Dark Zephyr with a flurry of knife stabs. "Did you notice the factory ship that is strangely accompanying the enemy fleet? That's the flagship of the Larkinson Clan. As long as we can defeat all of these Hexer and Larkinson mechs, we have a straight shot at the creator of living mechs. Patriarch Ves Larkinson is known to ride alongside his troops in battle. I can already feel him staring in our direction!"

Whether Dukes was exaggerating or not, Ves indeed directed much of his attention towards the right flank of the battlefield.

It was a bit boring to watch expert ranged mechs such as the Amaranto and the Promethea in action as they had both become locked into monotonous shooting matches against their enemy counterparts.

Though it took a lot for Venerable Stark and Venerable Isobel to match their skills and wits against the foes that had made it their mission to contain the firepower of the Amaranto and the Promethea, much of the games and excitement were difficult to appreciate by external viewers.

Compared to seeing them evade incoming shots while launching their own at distant opponents, Ves much preferred to watch the unfolding clash between the Dark Zephyr and the pair of interesting expert mechs of the Nidin Vergers.

"Their fight will definitely turn into a spectacle!"

With the attitude of watching an exciting show, Ves leaned back in his chair and waved his hand to call up the design and specs of the Quadknife and the Filamon.

As a mech designer, Ves found the Quadknife to be a bold and daring interpretation of an expert light skirmisher.

It took a lot of courage to realize such a strange design.

"The Multi-Armed Designer usually applies her design philosophy to larger and more massive mechs. It's hard to support multiple arms on a thin and fragile frame."

Ves guessed that Master Ishi Veldam may have fallen into an experimental mood when she came up with the design of the Quadknife.

In general, light skirmishers were so small and light that it was hard to equip them with a pair of combat-capable arms.

Trying to apply another set of arms on top of that sounded crazy!

However, the ordinary rules didn't necessarily apply to expert mechs. The biggest reason why the Quadknife somehow made its four-armed configuration work was due to combining high-quality materials into advanced components.

The arms of the Quadknife were anything but ordinary. While they were thin and not too strong, they were still stable and sturdy enough to do their jobs without imposing too many limitations.

By opting to go for speed over power, the Quadknife was expressly designed to duel and defeat lighter and less-armored expert mechs.

Of course, it could also dismantle other powerful machines such as heavy mechs as long as it was able to find an opportunity to attack the rear or other vulnerable weak points of its targets.

The unconventional offensive configuration of the Quadknife could throw a lot of opponents off-guard.

Hardly any expert pilot encountered a four-armed mech before, let alone fight such an opponent in battle!

Even though the Quadknife was incapable of dealing powerful blows, it didn't matter too much as long as it struck enough times to wear out the resonance shields and armor of its enemies!

"This is actually quite a brilliant expert mech." Ves couldn't help but express his admiration of the design.

In his professional judgment, the Quadknife was not only a successful experiment, but also introduced new possibilities that did not exist before.

Ves didn't know why, but ever since this battle commenced, he had paid more attention to the Multi-Armed Designer's works than anyone else's. He could not stop himself from studying and deciphering the working principles of any Fridayman mech model that possessed two or three sets of arms.

What would it be like if he designed his own multi-armed expert mech?

"I would probably botch the job if I have to start from scratch."

Ves never explored this concept before and had no in-depth knowledge on how to pull off such a weird mech design.

This was why the works of Master Veldam became so attractive to him. Each of their forms and designs exposed much of the key design elements that made them viable.

Even if there were many secrets that Ves could not observe or master by himself, it was not necessarily for him to become as proficient in designing these mechs as the Multi-Armed Designer.

There was no point in imitating the works of a Master!

Instead, Ves found it much more interesting to take inspiration from the works of others and put his own spin on their ideas.

"The Master Mech Designers from the Gauge Dynasty are surprisingly good sources of inspiration." Ves amusingly realized.

He had already ripped off Master Toqueman Huron's neural networks and successfully his own brand of spiritual networks.

What would it be like if he studied Master Veldam's multi-armed humanoid mech designs and designed his own mech based on what he had learned?

This sounded awfully fun!

"There are many other Masters that have come up with their own unique ideas."

Every Master developed a signature technology that possessed their own charm, and each of them opened up his horizons on how diverse mechs could be. Ideas that previously sounded stupid suddenly turned into treasures as long as mech designers put enough effort into making them viable!

While the battle between the two sides rapidly escalated as hundreds of thousands of melee mechs began to collide and exchange blows against each other, Ves momentarily felt detached from the action as he experienced a minor epiphany.

His mind became filled with possibilities. Since he already treated Master Huron as an inspiration dispensing machine, what would he gain if he did the same to the rest of the Gauge Dynasty's lineup of Masters?

Could he develop a newer and more powerful version of a luminar crystal rifle if he copied elements of Master Bates' Slipstream rifle?

Could he design a 'poisonous' mech based on The Viper's works that was capable of breaking apart the armor of powerful mechs by splashing them with corrosive fluids?

Could he develop a unique flight system that was capable of performing a different version of Master Reizen's stuttered movement?

All of these ideas sounded interesting, but Ves soon regained clarity when he thought of how much time and effort he would have to invest in order to realize all of these scattered ideas.

He sighed and shook his head. "Not all of them are worthwhile for me to pursue."

For example, why would he waste his time on stuttered movement to begin with? Ves never developed a passion for mobility. That was the specialty of Juliet Stameross. It would be incredibly stupid for him to lose his focus on his core specialties and follow all kinds of fanciful ideas that did not have any direct relations to his design philosophy.

"At least I have been able to reinterpret neural networks into a version that is much more aligned with my specialty. I can't pull this off with every interesting piece of technology that I come across."

He stopped thinking about useless matters and turned his attention back to the unfolding fight between the Dark Zephyr and the famous pair from the Nidion Verger Mech Division.

Ves soon frowned as he continued to observe his expert light skirmisher's performance.

"Why is Tusa letting his expert mech get beat up? He ought to be much stronger than this! It is a joke for the Dark Zephyr to act as a punching bag!"

The fight between the Dark Zephyr and its opponents was difficult to track to normal people. A lot of observers would quickly grow confused and disoriented as the different expert mechs simply moved too fast and regularly changed directions!

The reason why the light mechs moved so much was because the Dark Zephyr was trying but failing to generate distance.

Each time it attempted to gain enough breathing room, the Quadknife always stuck close and never let the Dark Zephyr obtain a break!

The Filemon meanwhile also followed the Dark Zephyr at a distance.

Different from before, the Filemon was able to track the Dark Zephyr much more accurately. This was because the proximity of the Quadknife to the Larkinson expert mech effectively rendered the latter's Untouchable ability useless!

Most people who looked at this battle would think that the Dark Zephyr was currently getting beat up so much that it would succumb if it didn't receive any backup.

Ves was not most people.

"What the hell is Tusa doing?" He asked again.

It was only in the next moment that Venerable Tusa exposed his true intentions.

At this time, Venerable Dukes and Venerable Hawkes became confident enough that they could shred the Dark Zephyr before any backup arrived.

"Heh!" Venerable Dukes sneered as his Quadknife continued to rattle against the Dark Zephyr's increasingly frayed resonance shield. "These Larkinsons are too arrogant. Do they truly think a single expert mech is enough to stop us? They overestimate themselves!"

His Quadknife continued to stick close to the Dark Zephyr as if it was a barnacle. There was no way that Dukes would allow his prey to slip away at this point!

The Fridayman expert pilot became so focused on never letting go of the Dark Zephyr that he almost didn't respond when the latter suddenly drew out a grenade from one of its holsters and threw it out into space!

The grenade did not soar far away. Tusa had programmed it to detonate almost instantly, so once it did a lot of black smoke and sensor-dampening particles surrounded the area around the Dark Zephyr and the Quadknife!

"What?!"

Venerable Hawkes had tried her best to remain alert throughout this fight. She was aware that the expert light mech carried a bunch of grenades, and had even prepared to shoot them down if they became exposed.

It was a pity that it detonated only an instant after leaving the envelope of the Dark Zephyr's resonance shield!

After covering a modest part of space with interfering dust and particles, everyone temporarily lost sight and contact with either of the two expert mechs.

The Filemon lost connection with the Quadknife, but Venerable Hawkes was vaguely able to sense its location with the help of her powerful intuition and intimate familiarity with the four-armed light skirmisher.

The Larkinson Clan also lost almost all contact with the Dark Zephyr. The clan's command net did not receive any encrypted transmissions from the mech anymore.

The only way that Ves could vaguely track and determine the Dark Zephyr's condition was to check Venerable Tusa's condition through the Larkinson Network.

Only several seconds went by before the two obscured expert mechs finally emerged out of the black smoke!

As both the Larkinsons and the Gaugers observed the state of their respective machines, they quickly discovered that the situation had completely changed.

"What?! How could the Quadknife lost an arm?!"

"Why is the Dark Zephyr chasing after the Fridayman expert light skirmisher? Isn't it supposed to be the other way around?"

"Look at how fast the Dark Zephyr is moving! Has it been hiding its true speed all this time?!"

It turned out that Venerable Tusa had laid a trap all this time. No matter their experience and no matter their other capabilities, Dukes and Hawkes had fell for it and suffered as a consequence!

### **Chapter 4254 Dark Tusa**

Venerable Tusa Billingsley-Larkinson entered into battle with a vague expectation of what he might face in battle.

It was true that he had simulated fights against the known Sundered Phalanx expert mechs such as the Quadknife piloted by Venerable Osaia Dukes and the Filamon piloted by Venerable Kismet Hawkes.

The MSTS was quite good at simulating expert mechs. It could replicate the technical performance of these high-quality machines to a high degree as long as someone supplied it with enough information.

The intelligence leaks provided enough crucial details to replicate the essence of their performance. Even if the minor details were incorrect, it was not a big deal as long as the overall fighting characteristics remained the same.

The MSTS was also good at simulating how the Sundered Phalanx expert mechs might perform in battle. The mechs were all controlled by Vulcan or the piloting AI's developed by Vulcan in cooperation with the Quint.

In rare cases, the Quint secretly assumed direct control over these simulated mechs. This not only allowed the third order living mech to stave off its boredom and indulge in the fantasy of being a much more powerful mech, but also allowed it to learn the traits of different mechs.



This in turn allowed the Quint to generate and improve the piloting AI's responsible for giving the users of the MSTS a more realistic fighting experience.

The key factor here was that the fighting styles of the simulated mechs was limited by the cognition of the Quint.

No matter how much the living learned about piloting mechs by snooping in the minds of other mech pilots, the truth was that it was not a mech pilot itself!

Perhaps the Quint may have studied the profession so much that it was able to imitate the performance of an ordinary mech pilot to an excellent degree, but expert pilots were entirely different beasts!

Expert pilots derived their strength from many different traits. Their extraordinary willpower that drove them forward. Their superhuman skills and reaction time. Their supernatural intuition which seems to derive information from nowhere.

All of these advantages as well as the rich and unique life experiences of the expert pilots defined their performance and approach towards battle.

The result was that expert mechs controlled by simulated programs ultimately paled in comparison to those controlled by their intended users.

Venerable Tusa already discovered this truth after the first time he fought against an expert mech inside the MSTS. There were many different advantages that were unique to expert pilots that simply couldn't be replicated by any AI or non-expert pilot.

"These mechs are just dummies."

He never took the simulated expert mechs seriously as a consequence. The most realistic ones that could give him a real challenge were simulated versions of other Larkinson expert mechs.

This was because the MSTS not only possessed a complete understanding of their designs, but also collected a lot of data on the performance and the piloting habits of their mech pilots.

Tusa even found it fun to fight against the mirror of the Dark Zephyr on occasion. Of course, he had to artificially boost the parameters of the mirror mech by 20 percent or more in order to give himself a real workout.

"If there is no way to make my sparring partners smarter, then I'll just strengthen them the stupid way."

He adopted the same approach in his practice sessions against the simulated versions of the expert mechs of the Sundered Phalanx, but never forgot that his opponents were piloted by castrated controllers!

"If I have to fight against the simulated versions of the Quadknife and the Filamon, I could easily beat them within a single minute. If I have to fight against the real deal, I am liable to lose this duel!"

The difference a good pilot could make was enormous, especially for mechs that already possessed inherently strong capabilities.

It was already daunting for Venerable Tusa to fight against one mid-tier expert mech. Fighting against two of them at the same time was a bad idea, especially when their expert pilots were highly experienced and developed a lot of synergy over the years.

If this battle took place a year ago, Tusa would have never confidently demanded that he challenge them by himself.

This time was different, though.

From the start of the engagement, he already formed a plan that would significantly raise the possibility of defeating both of his opponents.

The biggest downside to this plan was that he would have to make a few sacrifices, but in order to remove crucial Fridayman expert mechs off the board as quickly as possible, Venerable Tusa thought it was worth the price!

It was difficult for Tusa to hold back during the initial clashes. He had to fool his opponents into believing he was only so good, but at the same time show off enough of the strengths of himself and the Dark Zephyr to make his performance authentic!

He knew first-hand how well expert pilots could smell a trap, but fortunately he knew a thing or two about deception.

He remained patient for less than two minutes after the start of his fight. He tried to minimize the damage to the Dark Zephyr's resonance shield as much as possible, but the Quadknife simply landed too many hits for him to hold out for long.

Not only that, but the slender spikes launched by the Filamon was also taking its toll on the Dark Zephyr's defenses!

Venerable Tusa recalled that his Dark Zephyr currently came equipped with an extremely expensive minidrive.

As long as the rear of his expert mech got exposed, this extremely costly piece of tech that the Larkinson Clan had especially commissioned from Morton Tech would get destroyed.

Tusa couldn't imagine how furious Ves would become if he returned with a broken combat drive!

"I need to finish this as soon as possible."

In any case, he gained what he wanted from his acting. He had been studying and analyzing the piloting style and fighting skills of his two opponents. He rapidly built models of how Dukes and Hawkes fought and coordinated with

each other in his mind and reconciled that with the technical capabilities of their respective expert mechs that he had already learned beforehand.

All of this sounded extremely elaborate and complicated, but expert pilots like Tusa not only possessed capabilities that exceeded mortal capabilities, but could also make use of the Dark Zephyr's formidable processing power to enhance their own thinking capabilities as if he had a cranial implant.

He did not hesitate to detonate a smoke grenade to obscure the surroundings in darkness.

Naturally, the smoke grenade that the Larkinson Clan provided to the Dark Zephyr was anything but average. It was a specialty product that had been expressly designed to interfere with the high-quality sensor systems of expert mechs.

Though the cost was high and the smoke didn't remain effective for long, it was exactly what Tusa needed at this junction!

While the Quadknife got blinded by the smoke, the Dark Zephyr was almost no exception to this rule.

Though the Design Department had specially attuned the upgraded sensor and scanning arrays of the Dark Zephyr to overcome the specific formula of the smoke grenade, it was still quite difficult to observe a lot of details through all of the interference in the surrounding space.

In fact, Tusa didn't even need these hints in order to execute the next part of his plan.

This was because after many weeks of practice, training and preparation, he could finally put his newest combat skills to good use!

"The shadows are my home ground." Venerable Tusa deviously whispered as his expert mech suddenly adopted a different movement and evasion pattern.

Previously, the Dark Zephyr moved like a flighty bird that made irregular skips and course changes. This was the style that best fit his personality and nature.

Now, he drew on the small element of shadow that he had recently acquired and embodied it as best as possible.

It was as if the Dark Zephyr suddenly switched pilots.

Though there were still a few familiar traits, the mech no longer kept its back straight but bent it down as if it was trying to lower its profile.

Even the color of its resonance glow had darkened from sky blue to a darkish gray that blended well into the surrounding smoke.

The mech also changed its dagger stance and gripped its weapons in a slightly different fashion.

Instead of getting ready to stab, it instead adopted a stance that was more suitable for slashing.

It only took an instant for the Dark Zephyr to circle around and approach the rear of the Quadknife.

If Venerable Tusa was still an ordinary expert pilot, then even he would have trouble tracking his opponent so precisely through all of this interference.

However, ever since he integrated the mysterious Shadow Dance Dagger Style Fruit, shadow and darkness were no longer foreign to him! It was as if he had gained at least a century worth of focused training and familiarization of a specific fighting style in his head.

Though Tusa was not arrogant enough to claim that he was the best at fighting in the dark, he believed his blind fighting ability should definitely surpass all of the expert pilots of the Sundered Phalanx!

"You're mine." He grinned as the Quadknife was just beginning to respond.

Venerable Dukes strangely did not detect the approach of the Dark Zephyr until the Larkinson expert mech had almost sneaked onto the Quadknife's rear!

This was an uncharacteristic failure because his intuition should have been strong enough to detect this approach in advance!

"What is going on?! Why can't I sense this mech anymore?!"

There was barely any time for him to think. Venerable Tusa was just about to launch his assault!

"Let the dance begin!"

The Dark Zephyr's flight system began to thrust in a radically different way, causing the expert mech to acquire a lot of rotational momentum.

This caused the expert mech to spin around like a top!

Since the Larkinson expert mech also stretched out its daggers, this caused Tusa's mech to turn into the equivalent of a giant resonance-empowered ring saw!

A lot of silent impacts took place in a short interval of time as the spinning Dark Zephyr kept chipping away at the back of the Quadknife's resonance shield!

Though the repetitive attacks didn't deal too much damage because Tusa had to make sure his Dark Zephyr could keep spinning, the frequency of blows was just as high if not more than the flurry of attacks that the Quadknife had unleashed just a moment earlier.

It was as if the tables had turned!

"Break for me!" Tusa roared as the Quadknife was almost able to repel the attack.

The Nidin Verger expert mech was actually capable of bending its arms the other way around!

After all, the Quadknife already diverged from the human physique by possessing an extra set of arms. It was not that difficult for the Multi-Armed Designer to configure the arms of the Quadknife in a way that allowed it to fight against opponents that were targeting its back!

However, in order to make sure the Dark Zephyr achieved a solid result, Tusa now only spun his Dark Zephyr around as fast as it could manage, but also resonated with the Bissonat integrated in the Unending alloy daggers.

The damage and penetration power of his blades had reached a higher level, but this still wasn't enough for the expert light skirmisher to overcome the Quadknife's formidable defenses.

Even though it was a light mech, Venerable Dukes was a genuine mid-tier expert pilot who had polished his willpower over many battles!

His extraordinary mental resilience carried through in his expert mech in the form of greater resonance strength and more substantial true resonance.

Nothing was invincible, however!

When it came to high-level mech duels, the key to enabling the weak to defeat the strong was to find the right element, attribute or conceptual restraint!

The greatest value that the Shadow Dance Dagger Style brought to Venerable Tusa was imparting him with special theories and methods that were expressly designed to kill!

Armed with these extraordinary assassination moves, Tusa employed one of them right now that seemed to blacken the daggers of the Dark Zephyr until they were as dark as night!

Then they struck at one of the arms of the Quadknife, not heeding the fact that the target still maintained its resonance shield!

The previous spinning attacks had destabilized the Quadknife's resonance shield considerably, but not to the point of overloading it entirely.

However, this was enough for Venerable Tusa to work with for the time being!

Now that this powerful defensive barrier had been weakened to a point, the strange properties that had overtaken the Dark Zephyr's weapons somehow caused them to slip through the Quadknife's intact resonance shield as if it was just an empty projection!

"What?!"

The daggers seemed to slide right through the upper arm of one of the limbs of the Quadknife.

By the time the Dark Zephyr quickly pulled away before a multi-limbed mech could launch a possible counterattack, a severed mech limb was already floating away!

### **Chapter 4255 The Art Of The Shadow Dance**

A lot of people who had been paying a lot of attention to the Dark Zephyr's entanglement with the Quadknife and the Filamon became shocked at the latest turn of events.

In just a brief interval, the Dark Zephyr went from being heavily disadvantaged to partially crippling the Quadknife!

"How did Tusa do it?! The Quadknife's resonance shield isn't even broken yet! This shouldn't be possible!"

"How much stronger did the Dark Zephyr become after its upgrade?! The patriarch must really like Venerable Tusa to equip this expert mech with so much power!"



"It's not just the expert mech that leveled up. Look at how its resonance shield has turned dark all of a sudden. Venerable Tusa must have figured out a better way to fight!"

Few people knew the actual truth to Tusa's drastic performance change. It was natural for people to attribute the differences to the drastic revision of the expert mech.

After all, the Design Department had indeed invested a lot of money and resources into reimagining its old expert light skirmisher.

From the complete overhaul of its internal architecture to the addition of grenades, the Dark Zephyr had turned from a shifty opportunist into a powerhouse that possessed considerably stronger upfront fighting capabilities!

The more knowledgeable and experienced mech pilots knew better. They understood that better specs alone wasn't enough to quickly gain an advantage over a powerful opponent.

Too many people overlooked the fact that mechs and pilots formed a single cohesive system.

It was easiest to strengthen mechs by spending lots of money into their designs, but the latter required a lot of effort from the pilots themselves.

Venerable Tusa shouldn't have been able to pull off the advanced and refined fighting and assassination techniques that he had skillfully utilized a moment earlier.

No matter how much of a fighting genius he was, there was no way he had enough time to practice an advanced weapon style and philosophy to the level of a supremely powerful weapon master!

Only an unreasonable item like an enlightenment fruit could allow him to gain so much proficiency!

If not for the fact that he had absorbed the fruit too soon and still needed many years to truly internalize what he learned and optimize all of the techniques to the physical characteristics of his expert mech, perhaps he might have been able to chop off two arms at once!

Venerable Tusa had no reason to complain, though. Depriving the Quadknife of a single arm made a lot of exclusive tactics and moves invalid!

"One down, three to go." He grinned as his machine circled around and waited for the right timing and angle to renew his assault. "Now that you've lost an arm, is it still right to call your mech the Quadknife? How about we call it the Trioknife instead? Don't worry if you don't like this new name. I'll turn your mech into the Duoknife, the Monoknife and finally the Noknife soon enough, hehehe."

"YOU BASTARD!"

In contrast to Venerable Tusa's gloating, Venerable Dukes had become absolutely furious!

This quick setback was a humiliation to him! Not just that, this setback not only had the potential to set him and his partner on the path to defeat, but also risked collapsing the entire flank!

After all, he and Venerable Hawkes were originally sent to reinforce the Nidin Vergers and prevent his fellow troops from getting overrun.

Now, even if his Quadknife and the Filamon managed to hold on, the Dark Zephyr's interference would ensure that the Nidin Vergers did not receive the help they sorely needed.

The Flagrant Vandal mechs had never stopped in their effort to torment the Nidin Verger mechs at this time!

Venerable Dukes might have acquired a reputation for a hothead, but he was extremely sober when it came to battle. His mind churned quickly and rapidly revised the threat level of his current foe.

"Hawkes! We can't hold back anymore! We need to put everything we have on the line to destroy this Larkinson expert mech as quickly as possible. This guy is more terrible than we all thought. If we can't stop him, he might single-handedly make our troops lose control of the battlefield!"

The pilot of the Filamon had already made the same conclusion. "Understood. Hold the Dark Zephyr as much as possible!"

The Quadknife dove straight at the Dark Zephyr. Even though it lost a single arm, the Fridayman expert light skirmisher did not suffer any other damage so it was still strong enough to suppress its opponent.

In any case, Venerable Dukes originally began his career with piloting conventional humanoid light skirmishers, so it was no big deal if his Quadknife lost one or two arms.

In his opinion, the Dark Zephyr was still only able to negate the attacks launched by two of the Quadknife's limbs at most, leaving the third one free to land a lot of opportunistic strikes.

The reality was much different from his expectations!

Ever since Venerable Tusa embraced the dark side of his heart, his entire fighting style underwent a metamorphosis.

"Who am I fighting right now?" Venerable Dukes grew confused when he saw that all three limbs of his expert mechs failed to achieve any significant results. "It's as if I'm facing one of my mentors!"

The mentors he referred to were the small number of high-tier expert pilots that were also stationed in Pima Prime.

These legendary soldiers and champions had reached a much higher state of human evolution. Not only that, they accumulated at least 50 years of training and other experiences that vastly enriched their fighting consciousness.

For Venerable Dukes to sense these difficult traits from an opponent that that clearly exuded plenty of youth was inconceivable!

As the Dark Zephyr and the damaged Quadknife kept dancing around in space while exchanging blows with each other, Dukes became more and more alarmed by the monster piloting the opposing mech.

It was one thing if the Larkinson Clan dumped a massive amount of money into an overengineered expert mech.

It was another thing if that very same overengineered expert mech fell under the control of an expert pilot that could draw out much of the potential of such a powerful machine!

"What is this weapon style? I've never heard or seen a school that teaches these weapon techniques!"

Seeing the Dark Zephyr fight at the moment was like seeing the performance of a vigorous dancer.

The main traits that summarized the Dark Zephyr's current movement was high displacement, high attack frequency and angular momentum.

The reason why the Quadknife was no longer able to land solid blows anymore was because the Dark Zephyr moved around a lot harder.

Its evasion patterns had become a lot more confounding and difficult to predict.

Even if Venerable Dukes was able to decipher the Dark Zephyr's next moves, he still couldn't do anything about it because each of his limbs were no longer able to reach far enough to slam their knives against his target.

In contrast, the Dark Zephyr seemed to have no problems landing frequent hits onto the frame of the Quadknife. By moving around, the former was constantly able to find favorable angles to attack the latter.

Multiple limbs or not, the Quadknife was rarely in the right place and orientation to parry all of the incoming attacks, especially when the Dark Zephyr unleashed them at a rapid frequency!

It was not as if the Larkinson expert light skirmisher was able to speed up the motion of its arms all of a sudden. This was a technical parameter that hardly changed as Venerable Tusa's willpower resonated with the expert mech.

What happened instead was that Venerable Tusa employed a lot of spinning and rotation movements in his fighting routine.

While the main reason he was able to pull off these moves without growing dizzy or losing control over his own machine was because he had quickly mastered the art of the Shadow Dance, he could not pull it off to this extent if he piloted the original version of the Dark Zephyr.

Part of the last round of upgrades was a comprehensive overhaul and improvement of its high-impulse multi-directional boosters. Juliet Stameross had incorporated a lot of new technology based on much higher qualities of materials and booster fuel.

These small integrated boosters were originally responsible for giving the expert mech the option of pushing its frame in every possible direction at a moment's thought, thereby allowing the Dark Zephyr to excel at avoiding incoming attacks.

This time, Venerable Tusa did not utilize the upgraded high-impulse boosters for their intended purposes.

Instead of using them to enhance the Dark Zephyr's defensive capabilities, he repurposed them to amplify his expert mech's offensive potential!

By aiming the nozzles of the boosters integrated over the Dark Zephyr's frame in different and more unusual directions, Venerable Tusa discovered that he could instantly make his expert mech spin in every way he liked.

Of course, it was far too easy for his expert mech to botch this process and spin in a different way he anticipated.

He had to spend many hours of focused training in the MSTS just to be able to utilize the upgrade boosters without making any serious errors!

Though he still hadn't completely mastered this technique as of yet, he did not feel nervous at all even when he was pulling off all kinds of dazzling moves in front of his two main opponents.

The practitioners of the Shadow Dance preferred to work in the shadows if possible, but they were never afraid of exposing their art to the light!

"This is called spin to win, baby!"

It was at this time that Venerable Tusa felt that the Dark Zephyr had come closest to embodying its name.

Due to all of the spinning, it became difficult for observers to distinguish anything solid about the expert light skirmisher anymore.

All people could see was a tornado of dark gray energy continually circling around before colliding against the Quadknife!

Each time the two expert mechs bumped into each other, the increasingly more battered-looking resonance shield of the Quadknife sparked many times in a row as it endured a high frequency of powerful hits!

A dagger strike launched from a mech that was floating in place was not that strong.

The conventional way to increase the damage of a melee mech was to make it move and accumulate momentum.

However, this was difficult to pull off in a lot of mech duels because the enemy wouldn't stupidly allow a mech to build up speed as if it had all of the time in the galaxy.

This was why relying on angular momentum was much more suitable in mech combat, and the new fighting style that Venerable Tusa had just mastered was stuffed with moves and techniques that took advantage of the power of the spin!

Faced with the power of an expert mech rotating like a spinning top with blades, Venerable Dukes had lost all breathing room.

Forget about landing an attack on this dark tornado, he couldn't even defend his Quadknife properly against the flurry of blows!

"Damnit, how much booster fuel do you have?! How can you keep spinning so much?!"

In the past, the Dark Zephyr indeed had to use its high-impulse boosters sparingly because it was prone to exhausting its booster fuel too quickly.

Juliet Stameross specifically addressed this shortcoming by switching over to a much better and more expensive booster model that was much more efficient!

Each activation only used up a fraction of the amount of fuel as before. The biggest downside was that it cost at least a hundred times more money to replenish the expended fuel, but this was more than an acceptable tradeoff to the wealthy Larkinson Clan.

Venerable Dukes eventually realized this as well. He was close to spitting out his blood.

"Is selling mechs that profitable to your clan?!"

The only major flaw of his opponent was that his resonance strength wasn't all that strong. Aside from that, the expert pilot vastly exceeded his peers in almost every other aspect!

This was why Venerable Osaia Dukes decisively abandoned his previous approach which sought to overpower the Dark Zephyr through a combination of superior skill and superior mech capabilities.

Since he no longer possessed an advantage in either of these two areas, it was impossible to achieve victory through this manner!

Dukes and Hawkes had no choice but to pull out all of their trump cards in advance!

### **Chapter 4256 Filamon**

Ves grinned so widely that it looked as if he was about to break his mouth!

How could he not be satisfied with the Dark Zephyr's insane turnaround and stellar performance?

Even when his Dark Zephyr was fighting against two formidable mid-tier expert mechs, it did not look at all as if it was getting beat up without any chance of counterattacking anymore.

It had firmly reversed its previous trend and wholly taken the initiative by adopting an extremely aggressive approach!

The immediate return on investment of gifting over a valuable enlightenment fruit to Venerable Tusa was a lot higher than Ves expected!



He had vaguely known that the Shadow Dance could instill a person with a powerful and extraordinary fighting style, but he didn't expect to see such a massive increase in effective combat power.

"Tusa has truly become unleashed now that he can leverage the properties of his expert mech to a much greater degree!" Ves concluded.

The drastic changes emphasized how crucial it was to cultivate the skills of his expert pilots. It was not enough for him to focus most of his efforts into increasing the performance of his expert mechs.

A part of Ves even felt a bit of regret that he had not chosen for the Mech Pilot Cultivation upgrade track back then. He had a feeling that if he chose to go on this path, he would gain much easier access to functions that could allow him to boost many other mech pilots in this fashion.

"Oh well, what I have right now isn't so bad either."

Ves had observed many powerful enlightenment fruits hanging on the Tree of Possibilities that could impart all kinds of other powerful skills that were suitable to different expert pilots that specialized in different mech types.

He just had to earn enough Ascension Points or somehow get lucky and win a powerful fruit in his next lottery draws.

"It would be best if I can inject powerful fighting skills directly into the minds of expert pilots through a more controllable method, though."

That was way too far away for him right now. His previous attempts to achieve similar results were either too risky or did not achieve the desired effect.

Without a breakthrough in his spiritual engineering capabilities, it was too difficult for him to develop imitation enlightenment fruits that could give other mech pilots the powerful skills that Tusa had received.

Ves directed his attention back to the impressive show staged by the Dark Zephyr.

The way it fought and the way that Venerable Tusa channeled his willpower made it seem as if he was truly treating the battlefield as a stage for his dance performance.

It was beautiful and entrancing to the point where Ves detected that his judgment was actually being affected at the moment.

The power of Tusa's Shadow Dance actually possessed a hypnotic component!

"Perhaps hypnotic isn't the right way to describe it. He is somehow deceiving everyone through his performance into lowering their vigilance."

Ordinary opponents would probably become so entranced by the Dark Zephyr's manipulative actions that they would probably be caught off-guard once the expert mech finally sank its daggers into its targets!

Of course, expert pilots such as Dukes and Hawkes would never get fooled this way.

This was why the Dark Zephyr attacked the Quadknife head-on! Tusa clearly wanted to overpower the damage to his opponent while his own mech could still last!

Ves frowned a bit when he took note of how much Tusa was pushing the Dark Zephyr at the moment.

Even with its latest upgrade, the Dark Zephyr had never been designed to fight in this way!

If Ves anticipated that Venerable Tusa suddenly acquired the Shadow Dance Dagger Style a few years ago, he would have altered the requirements of the

upgrade project and strengthened specific parts of the mech frame to endure all of the added forces.

The strain on the Dark Zephyr had multiplied by at least two times because of the new combat approach. The Shadow Dance Dagger Style that Venerable Tusa was pulling off imposed multiple heavy burdens to the less resilient parts and systems of the expert light skirmisher.

Even if the Dark Zephyr was built to high standards, it could not keep up this level of intensity for long!

"I'm not sure it will last more than five or six minutes at this rate." Ves estimated.

After that, the Dark Zephyr would ultimately run out of booster fuel. Even if that didn't happen yet, its most vulnerable components would have endured so many stresses that it wasn't possible anymore to utilize them at 100 percent capacity.

If Venerable Tusa did not heed the warnings and continued to push his Dark Zephyr to this extent, then he was liable to break something important!

This would cause his expert mech to falter and become instantly exposed to his enemies.

In effect, Tusa's situation was not as optimistic as it looked. The Dark Zephyr needed to finish off the Quadknife and the Filamon quickly before it ran out of steam, but would the Nidin Verger expert mechs truly be willing to roll over after suffering a single setback?

As the Quadknife's resonance shield had reached a dire state, Venerable Dukes channeled his urgency and his desperate desire to protect his fellow Fridaymen from the evil Hexers into the deepest parts of his expert mech.

This change caused the expert mech designed by Master Ishi Veldam to unleash its hidden power!

Not only did the expert mech grow hotter, but as the Dark Zephyr came close, the Quadknife struck back with considerably greater power and ferocity than before!

This wasn't all, though. Aside from resonating with expert mech, Venerable Dukes also resonated with the knives held in his expert mech's hands.

These transphasic weapons shook as the phasewater integrated into them became fully excited.

Dukes paid a considerable price in order to maximize the destructive and penetrative power of these weapons!

"Break for me, Zephyr!"

Even though Venerable Tusa's expert mech had been on the attack for a while, its resonance shield never recovered.

Instead, it had continued to accumulate damage all this time.

As a result, the latest combination strike from the Quadknife finally broke the Dark Zephyr's first and important layer of defense!

"Ha! We've finally cracked open your shell!"

It didn't really matter to Venerable Dukes that his transphasic power strike failed to inflict substantial damage to the Dark Zephyr's frame.

One of the fully-activated knives held by the Quadknife had gone on to stab through several layers of the Dark Zephyr's thin exterior.

The transphasic knife should have been able to sink much deeper into the armor of a more conventional expert light mech.

It was only by virtue of the Dark Zephyr's Unending alloy armor system that the transphasic knife hadn't been able to punch through the armor in a single go. This might not be the case if a larger and stronger expert mech had launched this attack!

"Damn." Venerable Tusa softly cursed as he suddenly needed to put a lot more focus on evading incoming attacks. "All of this phasewater tech has really messed up the old rules."

Unending alloy which Tusa previously considered almost invincible against the same level of opponent suddenly became a lot less valuable with the introduction of transphasic weapons.

Even though the Gauge Dynasty had only been rooted in the Red Ocean for less than a decade, this was more than enough time for its scientists and engineers to master the preliminary uses of phasewater and develop all kinds of interesting transphasic technology.

Due to cost constraints and phasewater scarcity, only mid-tier and high-tier expert mechs received transphasic equipment. The phasewater content in them was also quite low, but even a few grams of phasewater could make a substantial difference in lethality!

It wasn't just the Quadknife that possessed this capability either.

The Filamon also posed a much more dangerous threat now that it was possible to target the individual components of the Dark Zephyr!

Venerable Hawkes had gone from an annoyance into a fatal threat towards Venerable Tusa.

This was because the female expert pilot had always sought to attack the rear of the Dark Zephyr whenever possible.

Venerable Tusa had no choice but to move a lot more cautiously. He couldn't even spin as recklessly as before as Venerable Hawkes always had a chance to land her transphasic attacks onto the flight system or more importantly the combat drive of the Dark Zephyr.

He truly couldn't afford to lose either of these parts!

Though the shadowy Dark Zephyr started to perform all kinds of elaborate evasive movements, Tusa simply couldn't prevent his expert mech from getting pierced by thin but extremely penetrating spikes.

A few of them even sunk so deep that they damaged some of the internal components of his expert mech!

The Filamon truly showcased its deadly potential at the moment. Venerable Hawkes just needed to get lucky once in order to cripple or disable the Dark Zephyr's flight system, thereby instantly plummeting its mobility to the bottom!

"I'll puncture you with my spikes until you've become a hedgehog!" Venerable Hawkes cried as she summoned the utmost of her skill to prevent the Dark Zephyr from escaping from her sights.

Her expert harasser mech became so threatening to Tusa that he determined he needed to take it down right away.

Though the Quadknife was more powerful in absolute terms, it was too difficult for it to target the Dark Zephyr's rear under normal circumstances.

"I need to break this sandwich!" Venerable Tusa realized. "The best way to do this is to remove the weakest bread slice!"

The Dark Zephyr collided its daggers against the knives of the Quadknife once again!

Due to the latter's transphasic properties, the Larkinson expert mech's daggers actually incurred a bit of damage to the flat of their blades.

Normally, Venerable Tusa would have tried to avoid this outcome, but this time he had gritted his teeth and accepted this price in order to borrow from the reaction force.

The push it received from the Quadknife along with the activation of its flight system and the right boosters allowed the Dark Zephyr to bounce away and turn around so that it was able to leap towards the Filamon!

Numerous thin spikes sank into the Dark Zephyr's chest and limbs and Tusa had to make sure to shield the more critical parts of his expert mech by tucking in its arms.

Though the Filamon had already attempted to boost away with the help of its combat drive, the Dark Zephyr simply activated its own Stiletto Drive and was able to gain much more speed due to its higher performance level!

Yet before the Dark Zephyr could even get close, Venerable Hawkes resonated extra hard with the flight system of her expert mech.

Soon enough, the Filamon literally seemed to super stutter through space at an appallingly high speed!

The distance between the two expert mechs had multiplied by almost fifty times in a matter of a couple of seconds!

Even though the Filamon couldn't maintain this super stuttered movement for long, the results were more than worth it as it had flown well out of grenade tossing range!

"Hah, didn't expect that, didn't you? You can forget about catching up to me, Larkinson!"

If that wasn't enough, the Filamon that had just reached a much safer distance began to prepare another resonance ability.

After Venerable Hawkes spent a few seconds on resonating with her filament rifle, it suddenly shot out a rapid salvo of glowing spikes soared towards the Dark Zephyr's position and every immediate space around it at five times their usual speed!

Venerable Tusa and his expert mech barely had any time to react. In fact, he already sensed extreme danger heading in his direction, so he had already started to turn around his expert mech so that its feet pointed towards the Filamon in an effort to minimize its exposed surface area.

Even then, it was too late as three of the powerful glowing spikes managed to punch deep through the Unending alloy!

It was only through skill and rapid thinking that Tusa was able to ensure that two of the spikes ended up puncturing the legs while the final one poked a whole straight through the dagger that his expert mech quickly put in the way.

If the latter one had been allowed to go through, it would have certainly punched through the side of the torso!

"Damnit! You guys are ruining my daggers!"

The worst part about the Filamon's latest attack was that it had knocked the Dark Zephyr out of warp travel.

Venerable Tusa could already feel the Quadknife charging towards his expert mech from behind!

### **Chapter 4257 The Knives Come Out**

Venerable Kismet Hawkes and her Filamon had just burst out with great power and needed to cool down before they could pull off another intensive move.

Ordinarily, that would have made the Filamon vulnerable to a counterattack, but this was the moment where Quadknife took action!



"Dukes!"

"On it, Hawkes!"

As a tag team that had cooperated on the battlefield for years, Venerable Dukes had already prepared to put pressure on the Dark Zephyr the instant his partner had moved past her peak.

This was a familiar routine to them that had worked out many times against many different opponents.

The theory was simple. They both alternated their offenses so that they could apply constant pressure onto their opponents.

Because their expert mechs burst out with maximum power or close to it during the short time they took the lead, their opponent would never be able to do anything but defend and react!

Though the expert pilots and expert mechs applying this tactic would rapidly drain themselves, Dukes and Hawkes preferred not to resort to this measure during large battles.

After all, there were a lot more opponents for them to defeat, so it was an ingrained habit for them to conserve their energy and resources.

It was a pity that they already encountered a tough opponent at the start of their participation in this major battle. The Dark Zephyr posed such a threat to them and everyone else that Dukes and Hawkes felt obliged to commit everything to taking it down!

If an expert mech with this much raw power and piloting proficiency got loose, then a lot of other friendlies would get demolished!

With this thought, Venerable Dukes did not hesitate to draw out everything he could out of his Quadknife.

Its three knives were already glowing and thrumming with both true resonance and transphasic power.

The blending of these two high-level energies generated so much penetration potential that Hawkes was convinced that they could slice through the Dark Zephyr's unusually resilient armor plating!

"Whatever expensive crap your expert mech is made of is no match to the power of Fridayman tech!"

The timing of the Quadknife's approach did not give Venerable Tusa much time to react. His Dark Zephyr quickly activated its strained high-impulse boosters once again to not only dodge to the side, but also spin it around in order to parry the attacks that it could not evade!

Fortunately, Tusa had chosen for his expert mech to spin and evade in the right direction so that only the damaged side of the Quadknife was able to land an effective attack.

The Dark Zephyr ultimately managed to block the Quadknife's strike with its dagger at a clever angle.

Though the daggers that Ketis had personally handmade for Tusa received another chip, the integrity of the weapon did not drop as much this time.

However, just as Tusa thought that everything was safe, he suddenly detected a serious threat coming from below!

There was almost nothing that the Dark Zephyr could do under these circumstances except to trigger all forward-facing boosters, with the lower ones burning harder than the ones above!

This allowed the Dark Zephyr to distance itself from its current opponent while at the same time angling itself in a way that made it harder for it to get struck from below.

Even so, the Quadknife's surprise attack had come so suddenly that part of the attack still grazed a piece of the Dark Zephyr's ankle, causing the foot below to become unresponsive!

"You've got another set of blades?!"

"Legs can hold blades as well, you idiot!"

For the first time since the start of this battle, Venerable Tusa encountered a phenomenon that did not match the intelligence.

The intelligence leaks and other sources collected fairly detailed information about the Quadknife's design, but none of them ever suggested that its legs not only possessed the same range of motion as a pair of arms, but also contained integrated knives!

When Tusa directed his expert mech's optical sensors towards his opponent's legs, he saw that a knife-like spike had extended from each foot!

Tusa cursed at the sight. "This is cheating!"

It turned out that the Multi-Limbed Designer wasn't even honest when she named it the Quadknife.

A name like that would always make people assume that the Quadknife could only ever possess four weapons.

In most cases, the legs of a mech played a negligible role on battlefields. It was too easy for people to dismiss their existence. Aside from kicking, absorbing damage and maintaining the balance of a mech in flight, they seemed to serve no other meaningful purpose!

This was the brilliance of Master Veldam's design.

On the surface, the pair of legs of the Quadknife looked like they were normal. Many classified records that the Fridayman had on file showed that the legs were also of normal design according to its design schematics.

In truth, their internal design looked a lot different! Only the exclusive maintenance crew of the Quadknife as well as a select few other other people knew about this extra feature.

As a result, whereas everyone thought that Venerable Dukes piloted the Quadknife, he had secretly gained a Sextaknife!

Though the Dark Zephyr had turned the Sextaknife had turned into a Quintaknife, this still gave the Fridayman expert light skirmisher a lot of limbs to work with. The positioning of the legs granted Venerable Dukes a lot of tricky attack angles that were difficult to block for humanoid mechs.

Dukes felt incredibly irked that he had been forced to expose this crucial trump card at the start of his first real battle in the Red Ocean.

Instead of getting angry at his failure to stop the Dark Zephyr through normal means, he vented all of his fury and hatred towards the source of his misfortune.

"I won't forgive myself if I don't chop you up like sushi!"

"Have you ever thought about switching to a nutrient pack diet?!"

Venerable Dukes was far from done with his latest offensive. His Quadknife might not possess the instantaneous displacement and spinning capabilities of the Dark Zephyr, but it came equipped with a stutter flight system that allowed it to rapidly reposition itself so that it was able to charge at the Larkinson expert mech again.

When Venerable Tusa saw that the Quadknife had transformed its legs to the point where it looked like it had become a deformed horror monstrosity, he felt extremely depressed.

Just like Dukes and Hawkes, Tusa attempted to defeat his opponents while conserving his resources as much as possible.

However, the deep combat potential as well as the strongest abilities of their expert mechs had caused Tusa to misjudge the situation too much.

His expert mech already suffered considerably more damage than it was supposed to incur if Tusa fought all-out at the beginning!

"Maybe too much of Ves has rubbed off on me." Tusa grumbled. "Serves me right for acting like a cheapskate."

As soon as Venerable Tusa threw away every instruction and directive that he had received from Ves out of his mind, he suddenly felt a lot lighter and more liberated.

"I'm just going to do what I want!"

This decision did not come too soon, as the Quadknife had almost reached the Dark Zephyr at this point!

As the five knives of the former were about to plunge into the frame of the latter, Venerable Tusa resonated with his expert mech in a substantially different manner!

Venerable Dukes could clearly sense the fluctuations of true resonance from his opponent, but his confidence never receded.

There was nothing that the Dark Zephyr could do to avoid getting stabbed by at least one of the Quadknife's weapons!

"I'VE GOT YOU NOW!"

Though the Dark Zephyr attempted to evade the incoming strikes in a similar way as before, Venerable Dukes had already grown a lot more familiar with his opponent's evasion moves.

The Quadknife squeezed a bit of extra push out of its overstrained stutter flight system.

This allowed the Fridayman expert mech to stutter ahead and drive its knives into the frame of the Dark Zephyr when the latter was just beginning to move aside!

All five transphasic knives sunk through the Unending alloy armor plating like a hot knife through butter!

The angles of attack and the momentum behind the stabs were so great that Venerable Dukes should have been assured that he had fatally skewered the Dark Zephyr this time!

However, the feedback from his Quadknife indicated that the knives encountered so little resistance that it was unnatural!

Only a tiny amount of time had passed, but Venerable Dukes was able to think so quickly during this high-pressure fight that he quickly figured out a lot of crucial details at once.

First, the Dark Zephyr in front of him possessed no mass or resistance, though the sensors of his expert mech said otherwise.

Second, the Dark Zephyr was known to possess a few illusionary resonance abilities.

Third, his intuition suddenly went wild as he instinctively detected a fatal threat from the grenade holster mounted on the front right of the apparently false Larkinson expert mech!

"...Oh crap."

It turned out that while the Dark Zephyr was fake, one of the grenades that it stored in this particular holster happened to be real!

Not only did it happen to be real, it had already been primed and triggered!

At the last possible instant, the Quadknife instantly hunched over and retracted all five of its remaining limbs in front of its torso, thereby forming an extra layer of protection in front of its chest!

It was then that the entire surrounding volume space became engulfed in a massive explosion that became so violent that it cracked the fabric of space!

"Are you Larkinsons crazy!? How many grams of phasewater did you throw away with this grenade?!"

"It's worth it, though! I would gladly pay a transphasic grenade to get rid of an enemy expert mech."

As the explosion ran its course, the Dark Zephyr barely managed to escape from the blast zone in time!

,m Aside from suffering a few surface cracks to its armor plating, it had come out of its risky move unscathed.

"I'm glad I got out in time." Tusa sighed in relief.

He knew first-hand how powerful transphasic grenades could be! Their blast radii were quite wide since they were designed for sieging purposes.

"The Quadknife shouldn't have survived since it got pretty close to my package."

It turned out that just before the Quadknife struck, Tusa had resonated with his expert mech and activated its Endless Paths prime ability derived from Arnold.

After several years of practice, Tusa's control and application of this prime ability had grown more exquisite.

This not only allowed the Dark Zephyr to 'retreat' while leaving behind a false version of itself in place, but also make it so that one of its grenades was mysteriously left behind!

Such selective control was extremely difficult to accomplish, but Tusa had put a lot of hard work into practicing it exactly for situations like these!

After all, no one expected that the pilot of a grenade-carrying mech would be crazy enough to perform such a suicidal move!

When the powerful grenade finally ran its course and the immediate space corrected itself again, Venerable Tusa and many others looked carefully at the results of this powerful attack.

"The Quadknife... is still intact!"

"Wait, where are its limbs? Where are its knives?"

A transphasic grenade could deal incredible damage to targets, but since they were mainly designed to cripple massive warships, their explosive potential was mostly geared towards blasting a huge volume of space rather than unleashing it in a more focused manner.

Even so, the distance between the detonated grenade and the Quadknife was so close that the hapless expert mech still received a lot of the damage potential of the grenade!

If not for the fact that the designers of the Quadknife actually laced a minor amount of phasewater into the armor plating of the expert mech to soften the blows of transphasic weapons, Tusa's surprise would have torn apart its insides beyond recognition!

As it was, the Quadknife gained enough holes on its exterior and interior that its core systems were already failing.

Not that it would have helped that much. The five intact limbs that the Quadknife had folded in front of it at the last possible moment had all been torn apart by the explosion, which meant that the attack had literally disarmed the Fridayman expert mech!



Venerable Tusa chuckled as he gazed appreciatively at the results of his handiwork.

Though he had been forced to use up an expensive transphasic grenade that he had reserved for other purposes, he became so amused at the damage that he had inflicted that he felt it was worth the sacrifice!

"I told you I would turn you into a Nokknife."

Venerable Dukes did not waste any time on replying. Perhaps the communication system of whatever was left of his expert mech had already been crushed.

Surprisingly enough, the cockpit was still intact enough to eject from the damaged rear of the Quadknife.

The developers of the multi-limbed expert mech had actually reinforced the cockpit and laced it with a higher concentration of phasewater to increase its resistance against decapitation strikes.

This design choice pretty much saved Venerable Dukes' life!

#### **Chapter 4258 Poor Man's Transphasic Armor**

Ves' mood turned sour the instant he saw that Tusa had used up one of his transphasic grenades.

"This guy..."

He had to admit that Tusa came up with a clever trick to ensure that the Quadknife got blasted as close as possible.

Expert pilots possessed extremely powerful intuition and their sense for danger was particularly attuned. This ability already started out strong when they just broke through, but could also continue to develop over time, especially when the pilot fought in many battles as was the case of Venerable Dukes!

The danger sense of melee expert pilots tended to be a bit more alert than normal since they tended to end up in much more life-threatening situations than normal.

In addition to that, those specializing in piloting light mechs honed their alertness to an even greater degree because they literally had to rely on it to keep their relatively thin and fragile expert mech out of harm's way as much as possible!

As a light mech specialist himself, Venerable Tusa knew exactly how difficult it was to trap people like himself.

If the Dark Zephyr pulled out a grenade from one of its holsters and tossed it at the Quadknife, Venerable Dukes would have pulled away his mech the moment Tusa did anything funny.

If that wasn't enough, then the Quadknife would have definitely thrown one of its knives or any other object at its disposal in order to intercept the powerful grenade!

Venerable Dukes may not have invested much time into his knife throwing technique, but as an experienced expert pilot he could still nail a relatively slow-moving projectile!

In fact, it wouldn't have mattered if Dukes failed to respond in time.

Venerable Hawkes would have definitely covered him in this instance! Her intuition and ability to detect threats was almost just as strong. With her exquisite marksmanship skills, she could easily pepper the grenade with dozens of powerful spikes in an instant!

Tusa already understood all of that in advance.

This was one of the main reasons why expert mechs rarely bothered with grenades. They were expensive, cumbersome and took up precious capacity.

They were hazardous to their own carriers as they could always blow up if damaged in the wrong way.

Since most opposing expert pilots easily possessed methods to avoid or neutralize grenades and other dangerous warheads, why bother with them anyway?

Venerable Tusa still insisted on using them though. While his main reason for carrying them was to give him the means to destroy targets that were too large to defeat with his daggers, he firmly believed that he could make them work against expert mechs as well!

He just needed to employ a bit of deception and trickery.

Tusa planned out everything in an instant. He employed the Endless Paths prime ability to create a stand-in that could be real but ultimately turned out to be fake.

Due to his skillful application, the Dark Zephyr that ultimately got stabbed five times at once not only looked real, but also exuded the same glow and the same true resonance without any jarring inconsistencies.

Yet that wasn't the most brilliant application that he employed. One of the biggest breakthroughs that he had achieved in his training in recent years was to master Endless Paths to the point where he could make parts of the 'clones' real and parts of them fake!

Of course, this did not allow him to split his mech in half or anything crazy like that, but it was easy enough for him to seamlessly leave behind the Dark Zephyr's daggers or any other loose equipment that it was carrying at the time!

This was why Venerable Tusa became such a huge fan of grenades. Since pulling them out and tossing them at enemies was such a big tell, the best

way to make them more viable in duels against other expert mechs was to skip this entire process!

Essentially, Venerable Tusa developed an entirely new tactic that could quickly be summed up as a false suicide attack!

Just like how crazy soldiers throughout history did not hesitate to trigger the grenades in their hands when they were surrounded by their enemies, Tusa could turn his Dark Zephyr into a highly effective 'suicide bomber' without actually committing suicide!

The power he invented through his own creativity and persistence actually exceeded what Arnold could do by himself!

This should actually not be that big of a surprise. The chubby cat-sized arganid clisenta that Calabast had turned into her pet was a relatively young mutated beast.

He was incomparable to the likes of Qilanxo and Zeigra when it came to age, mental development and combat experience.

His mysterious talent was pretty much an innate ability. Arnold did not understand the principles of its operations at all and pretty much utilized it on autopilot each time he wanted to make a bunch of clones to confuse his enemies and make his escape.

While such a mode of operation was enough to satisfy a simple alien creature, Venerable Tusa was an intelligent human being that also had to prepare for encounters against much more dangerous opponents.

It was quite impressive for Venerable Tusa to succeed in surpassing the source of this extraordinary capability!

Thanks to this, the Quadknife ended up in such an awful state that it had practically turned into a sitting duck!

Ves and many other mech designers could clearly see that losing all of its limbs was the least of its worries.

Large parts of its internals had either been blasted out of existence entirely or became so riddled with holes and deformations that they could no longer function at all anymore.

The flight system, the power generator, the sensor systems, the communication systems and more had all been rendered inoperable!

The damage would have been worse if the Quadknife was clad with conventional armor plating.

Even though the Gauge Dynasty cheaped out by investing only a few grams or so of phasewater over its entire armor system, the Quadknife still obtained enough resistance against transphasic weapons to block a lot of the power of the transphasic grenade.

That was why its half-crumbled frontal armor managed to block the bulk of the damage!

Ves was quite impressed with the performance of the Quadknife's armor system.

He knew the power of a transphasic grenade the best. A typical expert light mech with a weak or broken resonance shield should have been torn to pieces when hit at close range.

For the Quadknife to remain this intact by relying on drops of phasewater clearly showed the value of this key material.

Even a minimal application of phasewater was enough to turn a fatality into a crippling wound!

"It seems I need to incorporate a lot of transphasic alloys in the exterior of the cockpits of our most important mech pilots in the future." Ves judged.

He and his fellow mech designers only applied this treatment to the newer Larkinson expert mechs, but Ves saw a lot more value in adding this layer of protection to the cockpits of the older ones as well.

Ves even thought about expending additional phasewater to reinforce the cockpits of mechs piloted by the legion commanders and other important figures.

The best part about it was that he could adjust the ratio of phasewater according to the priority he set on the pilot. Venerable Joshua should definitely enjoy the most luxurious configuration if he had his way!

The poor man's version of transphasic armor systems also seemed useful to Ves. It was a good way to add a bit of extra protection to the mechs piloted by expert candidates and mech officers.

Now that the Larkinson Clan forged a lucrative trade deal with the Hex Federation that allowed the latter to rent the MSTS from the former by paying 5 kilograms of phasewater a year, Ves could completely afford to apply this treatment to the entire Larkinson Army!

As Ves used his implant to look up additional information about this subject, it turned out that a lot of different people had invested a lot of research in 'budget' transphasic armor systems. Their efforts yielded a lot of small breakthroughs, of which many of them still remained exclusive to different states and research institutions.

This wasn't a big surprise, actually. Phasewater was still so scarce right now that it was much more important to get more out of every single drop than to dump a bottle full of the substance into a single mech.

Ves had mostly dealt with transphasic products that adopted the latter approach. Powerful research institutions such as Morton Tech dealt with upper-tier clients that had the money and phasewater to invest in the

development of powerful transphasic expert mechs and ace mechs, but it was the exception rather than the rule.

The competition at the lower end of the mech market was much fiercer!

"Interesting."

It was a pity that the Larkinson Clan wasn't qualified to compete in this sector yet. Sara Voiken had already spent a lot of years in trying to master phasewater technology in relation to armor systems, but she could barely make anything worthwhile at this point.

Perhaps Ves should put a higher priority on hiring a genuine phasewater specialist or acquiring a phasewater-oriented research institution.

It would have been better if he could obtain an enlightenment fruit oriented around phasewater technology, but whether the Tree of Possibilities might grow one was purely based on luck and the whims of the System.

"The Quadknife's cockpit is getting away."

Ves turned his attention back to the battlefield.

It turned out that a small fight had broken out about taking down Venerable Dukes for good!

Moments after the Quadknife's damaged but intact cockpit had ejected from the torn and ruined expert light skirmisher, the Filamon floating in the distance had seemingly gone crazy!

"DUKES!"

Venerable Hawkes grew so concerned about her partner's life that her desperation fueled her force of will, brushing aside the fatigue that she had accrued and bringing her true resonance with her expert mech to another level!

"YOU'LL NEVER GET A CHANCE TO KILL MY PARTNER!" Hawkes roared as she poured her heightened emotions into her glowing weapon!

"Hey! Who do you think I am?" Tusa complained. "It is beneath me to kill a defenseless pilot!"

Venerable Hawkes wasn't in a mood to listen. The powerful corona around the Filamon grew brighter as the expert mech's transphasic filament rifle blasted out an unprecedented salvo of transphasic, resonance-empowered spikes!

Each of them soared across the distance at record speed in an attempt to saturate the entire area around the Dark Zephyr!

"Can't you leave me alone!?" Venerable Tusa cursed as he immediately recognized the threat!

His own desperation pushed his own resonance with the Dark Zephyr to a higher level as well, allowing him to quickly activate his Endless Path ability just a short moment after its first usage.

This time, the Dark Zephyr split up into many different identical 'clones' that each dodged and evaded in many different directions!

Unfortunately, Venerable Hawkes had already accounted for that. The spread of her powerful spike rain covered pretty much every coordinate that the Dark Zephyr could reach. The net was inescapable due to its abnormally high propagation speed!

Nine different apparitions of the Dark Zephyr got stung at once!

Yet just as the rain of spikes could continue to poke the copies that had flown to the rear, an explosion erupted from the Dark Zephyr at the center!

It turned out that Tusa had pulled off the same trick again!



The difference was that he had chosen to detonate a different type of grenade this time. The one that exploded in the end was primarily concussive and forceful in nature.

This meant that it generated a shockwave that rippled out into a sphere and exerted enough force to push out the transphasic spikes in the way!

While the projectiles were too powerful to repel entirely, they at least spread out just enough to spare the real Dark Zephyr that had ended up flying directly away from the rear!

"That was close!" Tusa gasped.

### **Chapter 4259 Crazy Sacrifice**

The Filamon had gone through great lengths to stop the Dark Zephyr from taking advantage of the situation and crush the escaping cockpit that held the body of Venerable Osaia Dukes.

As the escape vessel of a mid-tier expert pilot, its speed and defenses were anything but average!

Though at least part of its structure had suffered a fair amount of damage from Tusa's transphasic grenade, it still retained more than enough functionality to make it back to friendly territory.

In fact, Venerable Tusa never intended to kill Venerable Dukes in person. It was enough to destroy the Quadknife and remove an expert mech off the board. The outcome of the battle wouldn't fundamentally change if the expert pilot actually made it back.

After all, what would Venerable Dukes do once he returned? It was extremely unlikely that the Sundered Phalanx just happened to have a compatible expert mech on hand.

The only other way for Venerable Dukes to contribute to the battle was to hop into the cockpit of an ordinary mech, but how could such a combination possibly turn into a battle involving hundreds of thousands of mechs?

Therefore, Tusa really didn't care too much about letting Dukes go. Other nearby Larkinson mech pilots didn't care too much either.

The Hexers were different, though. There were still plenty of Hexer mech pilots that had been paying close attention to the fight between the Dark Zephyr and the two Fridayman expert mechs.

Every veteran from the Komodo War had ingrained an important habit into their minds.

Whenever the cockpit of an expert mech became exposed, they had to do their utmost to destroy it and kill the vulnerable expert pilot within!

"Shoot it down!"

"Yes, ma'am!"

Plenty of Hexer rifleman mechs and other ranged mechs opened fire at the cockpit!

Since the cockpit's mobility and evasion characteristics were nowhere near as good as that of a complete mech, it was easy to land a hit on its shell!

The cockpit actually integrated a small but powerful emergency shield generator, but the transphasic grenade had already broken it in advance.

It was only its transphasic armor plating that prevented Venerable Dukes from getting cooked to ashes by a penetrating laser beam!

"Save Venerable Dukes!"

The Hexers hadn't been the only ones who paid attention to Quadknife's cockpit. The Nidin Verger mech pilots that practically idolized their champions had moved in as quickly as possible.

They might not have been able to interfere in a duel between expert mechs, but they could still save their hero in his darkest hour!

Despite getting beat up by the Flagrant Vandals to the point where they had already lost a lot of mechs, the surviving ones did not hesitate to make a sacrificial play.

Hundreds of Nidin Verger mechs left the battle line, leaving their remaining comrades to fend off the Flagrant Vandals and other opponents that were steadily pressing them back.

The departure of so many Fridayman mechs at once had an enormously bad effect on the comrades they left behind, but everyone seemed to be of one mind on this issue. Not even the urgent instructions from their officers could stop them from doing their best to save the life of Venerable Dukes!

A lot of light mechs quickly arrived in front of the cockpit and formed a shield of metal around it to shield the vulnerable package against any further damage.

The toll they took was great!

Light mechs weren't designed to stand their ground and absorb incoming hits, so the shots fired by distant Hexer mechs easily hit the mechs and scrapped them one after another.

Sometimes, the heroic but impulsive Friday pilots that volunteered for this duty were able to eject from their cockpits in time, but there were plenty that suffered an accident and gave up their lives to buy a brief moment of time for their hero's escape!

Venerable Tusa became strangely impressed and inspired by this collective action.

Just because the Gaugers were his opponents didn't mean he looked down on them. He respected them as soldiers who fought for honor and family. They were not that different from the Larkinsons in that sense.

The only Fridaymen that Tusa truly resented were the higher-ups that had originally sought to bring down Ves and the Larkinson Clan. These ordinary grunts as well as their expert pilots did not bear any of the guilt of the original decision to attack the Larkinsons.

A part of Tusa found it distasteful that the Hexer mech pilots had become so eager to pounce on the weakness of a fellow expert pilot that they instantly attempted to hit Venerable Dukes when he was down.

He couldn't stop it, though. The Hexers followed their own chain of command and he already understood that the hatred between them and the Fridaymen had run too deep to persuade them from changing their current actions.

Besides, the current scenario was highly favorable to the attacking forces! The Quadknife's cockpit essentially acted as bait that allowed the Hexers to quickly reduce the number of enemy light mechs with ease.

The amount of mechs that had been shot down by this time continued to escalate until another party quickly took action!

"LEAVE DUKES ALONE!"

The Filamon had blasted forward in order to act as a more qualified shield for the cockpit. Its resonance shield was still fully intact and could easily resist the barrage of conventional attacks for a decent amount of time.

Not only that, but the Filamon had already begun to fire its powerful rifle against the Hexer ranged mech that threatened her battle buddy.

Dozens of Hexer mechs got impaled by spikes in quick succession, of which many of them happened to pierce straight through the cockpits buried deep inside.

Though the projectiles did not always manage to disable the Hexer mechs in a single go, the Filamon's weapon possessed so much ammunition that it was no problem to spike the targets a few more times in order to be certain!

"Damnit!"

Venerable Tusa's mood dropped as he moved his Dark Zephyr forward in order to respond to the other threat that he was supposed to take care of. He had only started to take action when the famous Dukes and Hawkes duo threatened to slaughter the mechs on his side!

Strangely enough, the Filamon did not move from its place at all despite the approach of a threatening expert light skirmisher.

It would be understandable if the Filamon was an expert heavy knight such as the shield of Samar, but it was just an expert harasser mech that possessed little effective combat power at close range!

"Have you gone mad?!"

Venerable Tusa simply couldn't understand what was going on in the mind of Kismet Hawkes at the moment. It made almost no sense for her to plant her expert mech in front of the cockpit of Venerable Dukes.

She would have been better off if she kept the Filamon mobile so that the Dark Zephyr wouldn't be able to get close!

"DON'T COME CLOSE!"

No matter what Venerable Hawkes had in mind, she still recognized that the Dark Zephyr was the greatest threat in the immediate area and immediately began to fire at the incoming expert mech!

Venerable Tusa did not feel pressured anymore. Even though his expert mech was still battered, there was a huge difference between facing a ranged mech from the front as opposed to the rear.

The absence of the tag team dynamic that previously constrained Tusa's actions also allowed him to activate the Untouchable resonance ability again.

Many spikes simply soared through empty space as Tusa skillfully obscured the real position of his expert mech through an optical illusion created with the help of Trisk.

The soft corona around the Dark Zephyr slowly faded from dark gray and back to its original shade of sky blue.

Venerable Tusa did not feel any need to resort to the Shadow Dance to fight his remaining opponent during this phase of the battle.

"Fight me properly, Hawkes. I don't want to bully you. At least play to your advantages."

"DIE, LARKINSON!"

"..."

It did not take much time at all for his expert mech to approach the Filamon, which made Tusa feel even sorrier about this situation.

If Venerable Hawkes was able to maintain her wits, then she should have flown away while engaging her transphasic stutter flight system.

This would have made it much harder for the Dark Zephyr to catch up as Tusa would have to wait until the Stiletto Drive operated long enough to raise its speed amplification to a high enough level.

However, due to the relatively slow acceleration of the Quadknife's cockpit, the Dark Zephyr could have easily caught up to the Filamon without relying on its minidrive.

Regardless of whether Venerable Tusa felt any pity for Venerable Hawkes, he still went in with the determination to tear apart his next target!

Just before the Dark Zephyr could get close enough to attack, the Filamon did not move from its place.

Instead, it activated a new setting that caused its filament rifle to extend an energy bayonet just below its muzzle!

Venerable Tusa initially didn't think much of it, but as his Dark Zephyr attempted to block and overcome his opponent's weapon, he found to his surprise that Venerable Hawkes was quite skilled at wielding its rifle like an improvised spear!

He could sense that Venerable Hawkes spent many hours in training and polishing her ability to fend off opponents up close with her bayonet.

It became a lot trickier for him to fight against the Filamon because he sensed considerable danger from the energy bayonet.

When he took a slight risk in order to inflict a couple of heavy blows on the Filamon's weakening resonance shield, the energy bayonet managed to graze a section of the Dark Zephyr's arm.

Much to his surprise, the energy bayonet partially bypassed the thin layer of Unending alloy and scorched some of the internals underneath!

"Damnit, is everything on an expert mech transphasic these days?!"

Even though the Filamon had turned into a somewhat competent melee combatant, it didn't change the fact that it was primarily configured and optimized for ranged combat.

Its bayonet mode was merely an option of last resort when the Filamon could no longer outrun its pursuers!

Against a true melee mech specialist like Venerable Tusa, the attempt by Hawkes to repel his Dark Zephyr up close was doomed to fail unless she received support!

It was not as if the Sundered Phalanx had given up on Dukes and Hawkes. Enemy ranged mechs occasionally took potshots at the Dark Zephyr, but this was clearly an exercise in futility considering that Tusa always kept his machine mobile!

He wasn't afraid of the Star of Liberation or the Tensars, and he could easily angle his expert mech in a way that put the Filamon or other Fridaymen mechs in the firing line.

Eventually, the Dark Zephyr steadily ground down the Filamon with repeated strikes.

First, the resonance shield popped.

Second, the thin filament rifle broke in half, which also happened to remove its energy bayonet from the equation.

Third, the Dark Zephyr completely ignored the backup knife that the Filamon pulled out and thoroughly thrust its dagger into so many weak points that Venerable Hawkes finally ejected her cockpit from her trusty machine!

"What a pity." Tusa sighed and shook his head.

He felt no accomplishment at all for this successful takedown. While he was confident that he could have taken down the Filamon sooner or later, there was a difference between beating an earnest opponent and beating an opponent that had gone crazy all of a sudden.

"Tusa." Ves opened a direct communication channel to the Dark Zephyr. "Will you let the cockpits of Dukes and Hawkes get away like this?"



"I have no interest in chasing them any further." Tusa decisively answered. "I have my own honor."

"...Suit yourself. Don't dawdle around then. You should provide relief to Venerable Imaris Cross. The sooner we defeat all of the enemy expert mechs at the right flank, the sooner we can tip the battle in our favor and win this battle. Don't let your feelings harm the lives of our mech pilots. The longer this fight goes on, the more our clansmen will perish."

"You don't need to remind me of that, Ves. Let me do my job while you stick to yours."

Venerable Tusa took a brief moment to find his center again and moved in the direction of the Crosser mech units.

He still had plenty of other expert mechs to slay!

#### **Chapter 4260 Bright Warrior Mark LI**

Ves grinned widely as he continued to sit in the observer's seat in the Spirit of Bentheim's bridge.

Though Venerable Tusa had gone through a few twists and turns, he successfully proved his combat prowess and achieved the admirable feat of defeating two formidable expert mechs by himself!

The significance of this victory couldn't be overstated. By handling the threat of Dukes of Hawkes without any backup, a lot of other expert pilots were able to handle the other champions of the Sundered Phalanx without getting outnumbered.

Not every bout between expert mechs progressed favorably to the Hexers and the Golden Skullers.

The Hex Army particularly fell into a disadvantage during this battle. The dynasties of the Hex Federation had sent out too many low-tier expert mechs

that were piloted by expert pilots that had only broken through during the Komodo War.

There was nothing wrong with their skills and their expert mechs weren't too bad, but the Gauge Dynasty had dispatched a higher proportion of older and much more experienced expert pilots to Pima Prime.

In fact, the Gauge Dynasty also sent plenty of younger war veterans to the Red Ocean, but the local leaders had concentrated the stronger ones in Pima Prime, as it just so happened to be the star system where they were stationed in as well!

Due to this subtle difference, multiple Hexer expert mechs already incurred considerable damage.

Naturally, there were also situations where the expert mechs of the Hex Army and the Golden Skull Alliance gained advantages over their opponents.

This way, neither side possessed any clear advantages. The Dark Zephyr may have secured a powerful advantage at the right flank, but it would take time for Tusa's personal victory to cascade into other advantages on the battlefield.

"There is so much going on that I can't pay attention to everything that is interesting." Ves softly complained to himself.

"Meow." Lucky responded.

"Hey, that's a good idea, actually. Why didn't I think of that before?!"

Ves concentrated for a moment before Blinky emerged out of his head.

Mrow!

The Star Cat shook as if he had just woken up from a nap. After lapping at his fur for a few seconds, Blinky lazily floated besides Lucky and settled down in the air to observe the projected live feeds of the battlefield.

Though Ves found it a bit weird to track two different parts of the battlefield at once through his own eyes and the eyes of his companion spirit, he slowly got used to this new mode of observation.

Blinky pretty much functioned as a split personality to Ves, so it shouldn't be that much of a problem for him to maintain two trains of thoughts at the same time.

His efficiency in analyzing battle scenarios had dropped, but Ves got much more done in the same amount of time.

"You might as well come out and enjoy the show as well, Vulcan."

An incorporeal dwarf wearing modern dwarven armor emerged from the Hammer of Brilliance.

The gruff, bearded design spirit sat down on an invisible seat and fully showcased the parallel thinking process of a pre-divinity by tracking over a dozen different live feeds at the same time!

Of course, Ves himself wasn't able to process that much action at all. Vulcan merely kept track of everything and notified his principal whenever something noteworthy took place.

It turned out that a lot of interesting clashes had begun at the center of the battlefield.

The melee mech units from both sides had finally collided against each other!

Large numbers of mechs organized in mech divisions, mech regiments and smaller organizational units adopted all kinds of formations as they systematically tried to fulfill their respective roles.

Different mech designs and different mech doctrines violently tested themselves against each other. It was only on the battlefield where the works of Ves and many other designers truly proved their worth!

Ves initially focused his attention on the most basic mech of the Larkinson Clan, which was the humble Bright Warrior.

Of all of the older mech models that he had updated in recent years, the Bright Warrior Mark II Version B was definitely one that challenged him more than any of the other ones.

This was because upgrade projects such as the Transcendent Punisher Mark II and the Ferocious Piranha Mark III did not really change the essence or the fundamental concept of their designs.

Both of them fought them in the same way, but possessed much better specs due to replacing their older parts with newer ones made out of superior tech and materials.

Ves hadn't been satisfied with repeating this approach for the successor of the old Bright Warrior.

The original third-class version of the Bright Warrior had provided a stellar boost to the early Larkinson Clan.

The use of Breyer alloy which was much better than any other material that Ves could obtain at the time allowed Ves to equip his troops with crucial trump cards that could crush other ordinary third-class mechs in battle.

The original meaning of the Bright Warrior got a little lost after the Larkinson Clan transitioned into a second-class organization.

Breyer alloy no longer provided a substantial advantage over the enemies of the clan. Ves and Gloriana had therefore chosen to reorient the Bright Warrior concept around its modularity and its impressive compatibility with many different mech pilots.

"It's a good concept, but it has become a lot less special, especially as we developed newer and better mechs."

It was easy to decide to develop a straightforward updated edition of the Bright Warrior, but Ves did not want his first true mech line designed for the Larkinson Clan to turn into a boring and generic starter mech.

He recalled that he had puzzled so much over this issue at this time that he had eventually called up the Larkinson Mandate.

"Goldie. Do you have any ideas on how I should reinterpret the Bright Warrior?"

A beautiful Golden Cat emerged from the heavy tome and pressed her head against Ves in a friendly and affectionate greeting.

Nyaaa nyaaa nyaaa.

"I'm glad you are satisfied with the current configuration of the Bright Warrior, but it should really be able to do more than serve as a channel for you to spread your influence and derive spiritual feedback. What else would you like me to add in the mech design? You should already know that I am much more adept in spiritual engineering than in the past."

Goldie actually fell in thought for a time.

Nyaaaa nyaaa nyaaa.

"That... is actually not a bad idea." Ves became surprised as Goldie came up with a suggestion that he had never considered before. "Now that I think about it, this is a brilliant suggestion! It is definitely a possible path that we can take to elevate the Bright Warrior model."

The Golden Cat was connected to every member of the Larkinson Clan, so she knew what the Larkinson mech pilots wanted from their mechs the most.

According to the ancestral spirit, the pilots of the Bright Warriors were pleased with its wide compatibility and excellent flexibility, but these traits also made it so that they never got exactly what they wanted out of their mechs.

The Bright Warrior was a four-sizes-fits-all solution. Mech pilots had little choice but to pick one of the four 'sizes' and adapt to their choices as much as possible.

The suggestion that Goldie gave to Ves turned this interaction into a two-way street.

What if the mech was the one that adapted to the mech pilots?

Goldie wasn't referring to the living traits of the Bright Warrior mechs, but their technical configurations.

Properly speaking, the Bright Warriors were classified as semi-modular mechs because they came with a limited selection of swappable mech configurations.

While Ves didn't have to throw away this concept, he could expand upon it by adding additional modularity to the entire Bright Warrior system!

As the idea sounded more and more compelling to him, Ves quickly summoned a design interface and called up his Bright Warrior designs.

He loosely modified them by removing a few unnecessary elements and adding all kinds of modular hardpoints across their frames.

"What if I add slots to the shoulders so that the mech pilot can choose to mount turrets or missile launchers onto the mech?"

"What if I add another slot to the rear so that the mech pilot can choose to bring extra ammunition or energy cells to the fight?"

"What if I make the flight system modular so that individual mechs or mech squads can mount different models that excel in different circumstances?"

"What if I design a whole suite of varied weaponry that perform better in different roles and battles?"

Ves' imagination went wild that day! His need to elevate the level of the Bright Warrior drove him to draft all kinds of varied equipment and modules!

All of these ideas added to a determination that the design concept of the Bright Warrior could truly catch up to the needs of the Larkinson Clan again if he executed it to the fullest!

"This... modularization of the Bright Warrior might be the key to maintaining its relevance to our clan. You're a genius, Goldie!" Ves grinned and kissed the glowing cat's head!

Nyaaaaa~

Ves polished and organized his scattered ideas into a proper draft design and design proposal.

He could already imagine the Bright Warrior Mark II's changing his clan for the better.

"The keywords here are modularity and choice." Ves affirmed. "While the Bright Warrior still comes in four main flavors, you can sprinkle additional seasoning or ingredients on top of it depending on the needs of the mech pilot or the mech unit."

He could already tell that introducing the modularized version of the Bright Warrior would definitely increase the logistical burden of the Larkinson Army!

This was because in order to give every mech pilot a lot of choice, it was essential for the clan to fabricate and stockpile a large and varied collection of modules and external equipment!

For example, the swordsman mech version of the Bright Warrior no longer had to wield the same model of longsword like every other copy of this mech.

The mech pilot finally gained the option to choose from a greatsword, a broadsword, a saber, a pair of swords or even a blunt weapon!

Ves and Gloriana just had to alter the design of the Bright Warrior so that it could more easily handle all of those different weapons with vastly different characteristics.

Aside from being able to choose between different weapons, the mech pilot should also be able to choose additional modules such as shoulder-mounted guns, short-range sensor systems, grenade holsters and more!

Despite all of these additional burdens, Ves became too enamored with the idea to give up on it. As long as his clan did not stockpile too many unnecessary pieces of equipment and produced them on demand as much as possible, he believed it should be viable to implement this new and more personalized version of the Bright Warrior!

Ever since Ves finally completed the upgrade project, a lot of Bright Warriors began to show up that no longer looked identical to each other.

Ves had left it up to the individual mech legions to decide how they wanted to handle the personalization rights.

Some mech legions prized uniformity and chain of command, which meant that the mech officers in charge of a unit usually decided on the modular configurations.

Others granted more autonomy to the mech pilots, which meant that the users of the Bright Warriors could configure it exactly to their liking!

Whatever the case, Ves had noticed a clear and major jump in pilot satisfaction for his new product!

This was why the Larkinson mech units based around the Bright Warriors looked a lot more varied and eclectic.



"It's kind of like an online game where every player has chosen to equip their modular mechs with the equipment that they brought with cash or earned through their own efforts!"