

## Mech 4311

### Chapter 4311 Audience Reactions

"NOOOOO!"

"THIS CANNOT BE!"

"MURDERER!"

"HEXFIEND!"

"HONORLESS DOG!"

The reactions from the soldiers of the Sundered Phalanx as well as the citizens of the Gauge Dynasty conveyed an incredible amount of fury and dismay!

In fact, many other Fridaymen who hailed from the other coalition partners also exhibited similar reactions!

The loss of the Neo Amadeus was a great shame but not a completely unacceptable defeat.

The loss of Saint Jeremiah Gauge, a relatively young ace pilot who still had a bright future ahead of him was much more devastating!

Ace pilots were pretty much one of the few weapons of mass destruction that states and private organizations were allowed to employ on the battlefield.

Each of them formed a massive deterrent and elevated the comprehensive strength and prestige of their respective states.

Ace pilots lived for a long amount of time. While it was extremely troublesome to prolong the lives of expert pilots, it was a different case for those that had successfully experienced their second apotheosis.

As ace pilots came closer to turning themselves into energy-based life forms, their bodies became a lot more malleable to their power.

Even if they knew nothing about biology, just baptizing their biological human bodies with their willpower for many years was enough to transform their mortal coils in order to extend their lifespans!

In fact, expert pilots were capable of doing this as well, but their resonance strengths were too low for them to make any major differences.

Though the lifespans of ace pilots still varied wildly due to the differences in their domains and usage of their powers, it was not that difficult for them to live for up to 300 years without receiving any specialized treatments!

Of course, everything had limits and it was extremely hard for ace pilots to push themselves past this point.

Their only way to break their lifespan limitations was to advance to god pilot and attain immortality!

Of course, no one in the Friday Coalition ever thought that their ace pilots had a chance of becoming a legendary god pilot that would earn recognition from the entirety of human society.

It was already enough for Saint Jeremiah Gauge to be able to serve the Gauge Dynasty and by extension the Friday Coalition if he was able to pilot ace mechs for two whole centuries!

Now, in a time where Jeremiah's promising career had been cut short after fighting his first true battle as an ace pilot, many Fridaymen mourned this devastating loss!

What was worse was that the defeat of Saint Jeremiah and his Neo Amadeus immediately exposed the rest of the Sundered Phalanx and the intact parts of the Kosic Ring to the power of the victor!

Patriarch Reginald Cross did not experience any of the negative emotions of the people he hurt with his actions.

Instead, he experienced ultimate bliss for winning this duel and starting his glorious career as an ace pilot on the strongest footing possible!

Few ace pilots had the privilege of defeating an equal of theirs on the battlefield, let alone claiming their adversary's life as well!

Decades or even a century could go by before an ace pilot would ever be able to fight a serious battle against one of their peers.

This wasn't the case for Patriarch Reginald.

This victory had greater meaning to him than anyone else in his position. His confidence in his strength and skill had boosted to an incredible height. No one would be able to question his battle worthiness anymore. He was no longer a dubious ace pilot who mainly relied on the unreasonable strength of his ace mech or the assistance of external helpers to defeat his enemies.

It was all him! Reginald knew for certain that he fought and killed Saint Jeremiah by himself. No living mech and no design spirit had ever bailed him out like they did for the other mech pilots fighting on the main battlefield.

Even now, he could feel an extremely close and intimate connection to his Mars.

All of the previous instances where he piloted the Mars couldn't compare to how closely he was able to understand and control his ace mech!

He intuitively understood that even if he was separated from his Mars, he could always call it back to his side as long as it wasn't completely broken!

This was an exceedingly rare experience for ace pilots. Only those that had reached the end of their current phase would think about bonding themselves to their ace mechs to this degree, and it always took at least several years to complete the first phase of the Mech Body Merger Process.

Reginald actually suffered from a lack of information because he hadn't put much effort into studying the Mech Body Merger Process.

However, that did not stop him from enjoying and benefiting from the consequences of his actions!

"I... have become the Mars."

Strictly speaking, the Mars had become Reginald as well, but since he had gotten rid of its living personality, the phrase had little meaning anymore.

What was important was that the Mars became a part of him in a way that made him feel as if he could actively mold his ace mech to make it more suitable for him to pilot.

He had already done that to a large degree by baptizing it with his force of will. The Mars had improved in ways that Patriarch Reginald couldn't completely describe, but none of them were bad from his perspective!

His desire to pilot a stronger, tougher and more long-lasting mech had partially been realized due to the transformation that he had managed to spur on. It had played an important role in allowing Patriarch Reginald to win this crucial mech duel!

In fact, his Mars was still changing even now. By defeating the Neo Amadeus in single combat, the ace hybrid mech's god body mechanism was harvesting a lot more spiritual feedback than before!

The amount of people that actively watched the duel from remote and rooted for Patriarch Reginald and his Mars were too many to count!

Though a significant portion of that same audience became dismayed when Jeremiah and his Neo Amadeus lost, more people sincerely admired the powerful Mars and celebrated its success on the battlefield!

Though Reginald cared nothing about the senseless opinions of completely irrelevant strangers, the Mars was different.

As a mech that Gloriana had designed to evolve into a god, the Mars craved the worship of the public.

The more people admired the Mars, the more the ace hybrid mech was able to absorb spiritual feedback through its divine markers!

Even though the vast majority of admirers were both weak and incredibly distant from the Mars, the sheer quantity of spiritual feedback produced by quadrillions of humans was vast!

The Mars hungrily absorbed it all as if it was a sponge that could never have its fill. No matter what messy thought matter different people directed towards the Crosser ace mech, its god body welcomed it all in order to fuel its long and uncertain ascension towards the third rung of the craftsmanship ladder.

As the Mars clearly enjoyed the worship of other people, Patriarch Reginald spontaneously felt like making a show out of his impressive accomplishment.

The mech slowly rose and lifted up its Whale-Cutting Saber that had run through the cockpit of the Neo Amadeus.

The Mars had adopted a victory pose that was both provocative and domineering!

"MURDERER!"

"Kill this brute!"

"He's so strong!"

"What a fantastic ace mech!"

Everyone had different ideas about the Mars, and Reginald's latest action directly stimulated many of them, allowing the Mars to harvest another spike of spiritual feedback!

As much as Patriarch Reginald felt tempted to continue the show and posture even further, he still remembered that he was still a part of an ongoing battle.

The defeat of Saint Jeremiah Gauge heavily impacted the Sundered Phalanx. Many of its mech troops already weren't doing so well due to all of the setbacks and losses they incurred when fighting against their immediate opponents.

The fact that the Mars was the last intact ace mech on the battlefield immediately caused the commanders of the Sundered Phalanx to assume the worst!

"Victory... may no longer be possible." System Governor Mabrius Gauge spoke as he lamented the loss of his nephew on the battlefield. "Speed up our evacuation plans. While there is still a chance we can secure victory today, if the Mars has enough strength left to intervene in the greater battle, then we must shift our goal towards mitigating our losses!"

Trying to win a battle and trying to minimize losses were two completely different objectives!

The former could still give the Gauge Dynasty a chance to save Pima Prime, while the latter essentially gave their enemies free rein of the crucial port system!

At this moment, everyone wanted to know how much fight the Mars had left. It was not certain whether Reginald and his ace mech were in a condition to exert themselves further.

Ves, who secretly celebrated the completion of his System Mission, quickly regained his composure when he recalled that the battle was not yet over.

In fact, certain powerful ranged mechs had already begun to shoot at the Mars!

Normally, no ordinary mechs dared to attack an ace mech, but everyone had seen how the Neo Amadeus inflicted serious damage to the Crosser machine.

For now, the Mars appeared to be able to resist the attacks launched by lots of ranged mechs by relying on its thin but still fairly potent Saint Kingdom.

Even if the condition of Reginald's domain field was anything but good, his powerful resonance strength was still on another level compared to the resonance strengths of expert pilots.

The Mars did not suffer any damage to its frame even after suffering thousands of hits!

The only attacks that succeeded in causing its thin and shaky domain field to wobble were the resonance-empowered attacks of Fridayman mid-tier and high-tier expert mechs.

In particular, the Star of Liberation posed the greatest threat to the Mars at the moment! The expert rifleman mech packed a lot of punch and its powerful expert pilot was able to impart her vengeful will to the full-powered positron and laser beams fired by her Slipdream rifle!

Patriarch Reginald winced as Venerable Kasia Rezkin's utter hatred towards the killer of Saint Jeremiah Gauge had caused her resonance strength to explode a bit. She had become driven to destroy the Mars and make its pilot pay!

"You annoying fly."

While Reginald was contemplating whether he should start swatting down the Star of Liberation and other dangerous mechs with the surviving armaments of his Mars, Master Benedict quickly uttered a warning.

"Don't fight, Reginald! You've won the most important fight for us, but you paid too much to secure this victory. It will take a lot of effort for you to defeat the opposing expert mechs, and the awful condition of your Mars means that your enemies have a small but real chance of exploiting its existing damage."

"What are you saying, Benedict?" The ace pilot frowned. "These guys think they can pick up a bargain now that my mech isn't as good as before. I need to teach them a lesson and show them that I can still crush them regardless of the state of my machine!"

"You can still do that, but I urgently request you to bring the Mars back to the Hemmington Cross. I have called up an emergency crew of mech designers and mech technicians to resupply your Mars with fully-charged energy cells and conduct emergency repairs onto its damaged frame. By my estimation, your Mars is around 12 percent battle effective in its current state and could drop at any time. We can lift that up to 30 percent after spending just 10 minutes with your machine. That should be more than enough combat strength for you to roll over the remaining elements of the Sundered Phalanx and break open the Kosic Ring!"

Though Reginald really wanted to continue the fight right away, his concern for the Mars trumped his bloodlust.

"Very well... I will go back... but you better do your job quickly. I don't want to make everyone believe that Jeremiah Gauge pushed me to my limits. I am not that weak!"

"No problem. Everything is already in place. By the way, please do me another favor and bring back the cockpit as well as the wreck of the Neo Amadeus back to our flagship. None of the Fridaymen should be able to prevent you from claiming your rightful spoils!"



Reginald's eyes lit up. Claiming a trophy from the remains of his opponents was a time-honored tradition!

"Will do. I promise you shall be able to enjoy the remnants of strong mech to your heart's content!"

The Mars used one of its hands to maintain hold of its saber while using the other to grab onto the Neo Amadeus.

Though his enemies intensified their attacks on the Mars, Reginald did not feel too bothered by the largely ineffectual hits.

He was already wondering what he should take from the remains of the Neo Amadeus in order to make a trophy that commemorated his first victorious ace mech duel!

### **Chapter 4312 Desperate Measures**

The fall of the Neo Amadeus plunged the Sundered Phalanx into despair!

Many Gaugers already understood that they had lost the battle from the moment Saint Jeremiah Gauge met his demise at the hands of Patriarch Reginald Cross.

The chances of being able to salvage a victory under these circumstances were not great. The Mars, though heavily damaged and partially crippled, was still a formidable asset on the battlefield.

Perhaps it did not possess the strength to challenge another ace mech in battle, but if the Fridaymen had stationed another one in Pima Prime, it would have showed up long before Saint Jeremiah actually perished!

Under the current circumstances, even if ace mechs stationed elsewhere in the Friday Colonies had already been dispatched to Pima Prime, they would arrive too late to save the local garrison from getting defeated!

"From now on, we are no longer fighting to preserve our homes. Our new job is to buy time so that we can evacuate as many talents and critical industrial machinery. Pima Prime may be on the verge of falling, but Rotes Cewma and New Rammes are still standing strong! Our Gauge Dynasty shall rise from this defeat and avenge the killing of our great and honorable Saint, but our ability to do so will heavily depend on our ability to stall and disrupt the invading troops as much as possible. The only way to prevent the Hexers from claiming total victory is to ensure that we can make a comeback!"

"We have managed to turn the tides against the Hexers before, and we can do it again! Our enemies will grow overconfident and complacent after their initial string victories once again. This will leave them open to a counterattack as long as we bide our time and recover what we have lost. Last time, it was the Carnegies and the Vermeers who were suffering the brunt of Hexer aggression. This time, it is our turn to suffer the wrath of our archenemies. Let us show the other Fridaymen that we are just as capable of picking ourselves up after a defeat!"

Though the mech pilots and support personnel of the Sundered Phalanx suffered a massive hit to their morale from the moment the Neo Amadeus fell, they were still professional soldiers who did not forget their duty.

Under the urgent exhortation of their leaders, the Gauger mech pilots did not collapse or fall apart, but bonded closer to each other as they focused on executing their mission.

The colonial administration had already commenced emergency evacuations. A long train of starships, either civilian or military, had been emptied of all redundant cargo and other junk so that they could be stuffed with as much expensive and valuable assets as possible.

The people on the ground hastily brought away whatever valuable goods they could pull out in a short amount of time such as high-grade exotics, high-end

processors, specialized lab equipment, modern superfabs, unique experimental specimens and more.

"We can't pull out this mass alloy compressor, chief! It's too big and it's completely affixed to the foundation! We can't dislodge it by force or else we'll break too many internal components."

"Scrap it, then! Rig it up to blow or call down a mech to tear it down! We are not leaving our stuff to the Hexers!"

Already a lot of crews were proactively destroying whatever valuable assets that they couldn't take away. Millions of MTA credits worth of industrial infrastructure were getting blown up in a matter of hours, but the Gaugers simply didn't have enough personnel to demolish everything on the list.

Even though it was clear that the Hexers would probably leave Pima Prime after a short stay, the Gaugers truly did not want to give the Hexers the satisfaction of looting a huge amount of valuable booty from Pima Prime VI!

"Why are we destroying everything that we have built? Won't we come back again once the Hexers are done with the place? They can't possibly steal all of our stuff! They don't have enough cargo space to empty our entire planet."

"We are trying to make a point to our enemies. Our goal is to discourage the Hexers from launching another massive attack on the Friday Colonies. The less they are able to recoup their losses from looting our colonies, the less likely they will come back to plunder us again."

The Gaugers in charge of this chaotic process made a lot of ruthless decisions that dismayed a lot of colonists that had committed to Pima Prime.

One of the most heartless decisions of all was the instruction to reserve most of the available volume of their evacuation ships for cargo instead of people.

Though the Sundered Phalanx already tasked a small portion of the available ships for the evacuation of important leaders, high-ranking mech designers, important researchers and engineers, surviving mech pilots, other military servicemen and so on, all of these vessels quickly filled up especially once they took on the families of the aforementioned people!

System Governor Mabrius Gauge had already written off millions of colonists who had moved to the Red Ocean in the promise of starting a new life.

None of them possessed the skills, wealth, connections or influence to make it worthwhile for the evacuation forces to reserve a seat on their outgoing ships.

"We underestimated the threats in the Red Ocean." Mabrius Gauge frankly admitted as he witnessed the unstoppable decline of the defending troops from the Palace of New Beginnings. "Our dynasty is strong in the Komodo Star Sector. No one dares to threaten us in our native territory. It is different in Magair. Here, we have only stationed a limited amount of forces. With most of our military assets a galaxy away, we have failed to deter the Hexers into launching a massive raid. We must not make this mistake again."

The Gauge Dynasty had learned many painful lessons today. The leaders back in the old galaxy were rethinking their entire strategy and approach towards the new frontier.

Whether the Gaugers would choose to strengthen their commitment or pull back their investment in the Friday Colonies was a discussion for another day.

For now, doom and gloom descended over Pima Prime V. The highly developed colony that almost caught up to Davute VII in terms of prosperity and economic activity would no longer be able to remain as big and influential to the regional economy as before.

This was such a crucial setback that Pima Prime's chance of becoming the main trading hub of this corner of the Magair Middle Zone had dropped to zero!

As the Gaugers tried everything they could to mitigate their losses, Task Force Fury and the Golden Skull Alliance still had a tough fight ahead of them. The defending mechs weren't showing any signs of flagging.

In fact, it was the opposite. The Sundered Phalanx mech units fought as if there was little holding them back anymore!

With many of its combat carriers reserved for the evacuation of critical personnel and assets, the Sundered Phalanx was unable to bring away as many mechs as before.

This was why the Fridayman mech pilots received the order to push their mechs as hard as possible and eject once their machines finally reached their limits!

"Don't be afraid of losing your mech! Just make sure you take down at least one Hexer mech with you and eject in time. We can still build another mech for you in the future, but we need you alive and well to defend our remaining colonies in the future."

This change of attitude caused the Sundered Phalanx mech divisions to stop their gradual retreat as they no longer tried to make their mechs last as long as possible.

Instead, mech divisions such as the heavily battered Medallion Guards and the barely recovered Nidin Vergers fearlessly threw whatever operational mechs they had left to the advancing enemies!

"Damnit, these Fridaymen are fighting as if there is no tomorrow!"

"Consolidate our lines and wait for reinforcements."

"Don't fall into their trap and exchange wounds with each other. It's not worth it to lose one of your mechs for one of theirs."

The Sundered Phalanx did not have too many concerns about losing its mechs because the Gaugers were in the middle of friendly territory. There were enough friendly forces in the region to provide them with safe harbor.

This didn't apply to the attacking forces. As long as Task Force Fury and the Golden Skull Alliance lost too much strength, the other coalition partners would doubtlessly be tempted to 'avenge the fallen'!

This actually caused the attacking forces to slow down their progress and fight less ferociously.

It was strange to see the Hexers and their allies holding back when they clearly held the advantage on the battlefield, but they too were becoming more concerned about minimizing their losses.

"Keep it slow and steady, men." A Larkinson mech captain reminded his subordinates. "We've already lost enough mechs as it is. We won't be able to proceed with our Trailblazer Expedition if we have nothing left to fight against the aliens of the new frontier. Just hold the line and let our artillery do the work."

Many Larkinson mech legions such as the Avatars of Myth and the Flagrant Vandals were unable to press the attack despite the fact that they were most comfortable when they were on the offensive.

Lanie Larkinson breathed deeply as her battered but still operated Lucid Rage mech had flown behind the mech formations of the Avatars of Myth.

After fending off an enemy expert candidate, her mech not only depleted most of its energy cells, but also lost a tonfa. Lanie had little choice but to pull back to her mothership so that a maintenance crew could resupply her machine and quickly patch up the largest breaches in her armor.

When her Lucid Rage deployed into space for a second time, Lanie looked forward to challenging other Fridayman champions and expert candidates, but it didn't appear that she would have much luck with that. There was much less room for independent action!

Initially, Lanie thought that the remainder of the battle would play out as a slow grind. The furious enemy counterattack was unsustainable. The Sundered Phalanx would run out of mechs sooner or later.

All of that changed once thousands of Fridayman offensive mechs gathered together and swung around the main lines in order to advance towards the invading fleet!

"The Gaugers have gone crazy! They're launching a suicide attack on our fleet!"

"What is their target?!"

"Their offensive is aimed straight at the Spirit of Bentheim! Their goal is clear. They want to decapitate our clan!"

"What?!"

Many mech pilots including Lanie became shocked when they learned of the Gauge Dynasty's final attempt at resistance.

The attack made sense in a way. Patriarch Ves Larkinson, the mech designer responsible for empowering the Hex Army with living mechs, was closer to the Fridaymen than ever before.

This was their best opportunity to assassinate an important figure to the Hexers and salvage at least one unambiguous victory out of this fiasco of a battle!

Many mech pilots of the Sundered Phalanx willingly took part in this offensive even though their chances of making it out alive was much smaller.

Their duty compelled them to offer themselves up and do whatever it took to permanently weaken the Hex Federation!

"Champion Lanie!" Commander Melkor directly addressed her over a communication channel. "I am dispatching you and your fellow champions back to our main fleet to protect our patriarch. Do whatever it takes to keep him alive!"

"I'm on it, commander!" Lanie promptly replied as she regained her sense of urgency.

Many more mechs hailing from the Larkinson Clan and their allies peeled away from the frontlines so that they could do their part to prevent the Gauge Dynasty from getting the last laugh from this battle!

"Protect our patriarch!"

The last dance was about to commence.

### **Chapter 4313 Adenau Purnesse**

Before Venerable Jannzi Larkinson deployed into the field, she had a brief moment of time where she could enjoy the company of her little family.

Many people in the clan had reacted with surprise when she initially became engaged with a clansmen.

Too many people saw her as an abrasive expert pilot who openly dared to defy the Larkinson Patriarch and anyone who supported a reckless agenda.

While Jannzi was completely unapologetic about her advocacy, this was far from her only side.

As a trueblood descendant of the Larkinson Family, family was truly important to her. The imperative to start a family and produce children that could continue the legacy of the Larkinsons was seared in her very being.



This was why she had taken valuable time away from her training to find a like minded partner.

Suffice to say, her initial dates did not exactly proceed smoothly.

Though Jannzi still attracted a lot of admirers due to the fact that she was an expert pilot, it was a lot harder to find a clansman that she considered sane!

Too many boys professed their support for the policies and decisions of Patriarch Ves. There was no way that Jannzi wanted to start up a relationship with a man who had no problem with dragging off the Larkinson Clan into dangerous alien territory!

She felt she was lucky when she finally met a match that was aligned with and supportive of her views.

Jannzi still recalled her first date with the man that eventually became her husband. Both of them dressed up for the occasion and met each other inside an upscale restaurant in the Commercial District of Kotor City on Davute VII.

"If I had a choice, I would have never joined the Larkinson Clan. Its history, its military background and its penchant for provoking violent conflicts with many different groups is completely the opposite from what I seek in an organization."

"Then why did you join our clan regardless of your personal feelings?" Jannzi curiously asked.

"Our family was in a lot of trouble back then." Adenau Purnesse-Larkinson helplessly smiled. "We were targeted by our political enemies back in the Grand Loxic Republic during the height of the Crown Uprising. The mass unrest and frequent terrorist attacks has left us bereft with allies and support to keep us safe. Your expeditionary fleet specifically swung by our planet to rescue my fellow Purnessers and I in exchange for offering our services to you Larkinsons. No matter what I think about your clan, I am not a man who

goes back on my word, so I have diligently put my expertise to good use even if I am not enthusiastic about my current employer."

"I can understand how you must feel when your circumstances left you with no alternatives." Jannzi genuinely sympathized with the man. "Do you hate our clan?"

Adenau shook his head. "Oh no. Your Larkinson Clan still has many positive aspects. I could have ended up in much worse places. I merely object to giving too much weight to the military side of the clan and taking personal part in dangerous expeditions and campaigns. I understand that it may have been necessary for your people to take risks in the past, but the gains that you have made and the business empire that the patriarch has built up are more than enough to sustain our prosperity and provide a good and stable life for every Larkinson."

"Is that what you truly think?" Jannzi asked as she genuinely looked impressed at what she heard.

In fact, she didn't have to ask for confirmation. Her strong intuition was already able to sense the sincerity in Adenau Purnesse's voice.

The man confidently smiled. "I should know, miss. I am an economist. I am currently working for the Central Bank of the Larkinson Clan. While I am not allowed to mention any specific numbers, I have come in touch with so much data that shows how explosively our economy and financial position still grow in the coming decade that I see little reason in employing our mech forces for anything but defense."

"That is exactly what I think as well, Mr. Purnesse!"

"Please call me Adenau. May I call you Jannzi, Venerable Larkinson?"

The expert pilot gave him a brilliant smile. "You may. I never liked the word Venerable anyway. It makes me sound as if I have put myself above other clansmen such as yourself."

"You are better than other people. You expert pilots play an important role in securing our clan and serving as role models for the next generation of Larkinsons."

"There is no need for you to flatter me, Adenau."

The two Larkinsons, one trueblood and one adopted, managed to hit it off well as they continued their discussion over dinner.

It was rare for Jannzi to find a clansman who possessed genuine pacifist views. This was because the recruitment officers specifically screened every applicant for their compatibility of the overall direction of the Larkinson Clan.

Anyone who harbored opinions similar to that of Adenau Purnesse were often kicked out of the recruitment offices before they were 10 minutes into their opening interviews!

The instance where the Larkinson Clan almost coerced the Purnesse Family into the fold was a rare case where people with radically different opinions ended up as Larkinsons.

Adenau and many of his relatives still couldn't forget the time where Larkinson instructors had put them into hellish training in order to 'integrate' the Purnessers into the Larkinson Clan!

In any case, as Jannzi and Adenau continued to date each other over the course of several months, they eventually decided to tie the knot and form a permanent union with each other.

Though Venerable Jannzi hardly considered Adenau to be the perfect man for her, he was at least mature and sensible enough to keep her pleased.

She did not hold any high expectations for her spouse. No matter whether Adanau was a respectable economist or a failing artist, it was enough for him to stay by her side as long as he did not oppose her strong views!

Adenau on the other hand was more than pleased with the woman he ended up with. Despite her notoriety among the Larkinsons, she was still a fairly powerful expert pilot who partnered with one of the most iconic and promising living mechs of the Larkinson Clan!

"I won't lie to you, Jannzi." The man told her lover fairly early on. "Our Purnesse Family strongly supports our relationship. I am hardly the only Purnesser that thinks our clan should chart a different course. Pulling someone as powerful as you into our family's orbit will strengthen our hand and give us more political leverage over time. We can get a lot more done if we unite our strength."

Jannzi smiled. "I have no problem with that. I already expected your people to hold such views. I am not opposed to allying with your Purnesse Family. Though we still have our differences, we also have a lot in common. I can't fight Ves and his sycophants alone. I don't have the political acumen and organization to effect meaningful change. I have concluded that the best way for me to save our clan and protect our clansmen is for me to work together with the more risk-averse members of your family. How many of them agree with our stances?"

"Plenty." Adenau smirked. "Though our family only makes up a small part of our clan, don't forget that the majority of my relatives are positioned in the middle and upper layers of the clan administration. Our influence is disproportionate to our numbers, but the problem is that the patriarch is so strong that many of us do not dare to voice our actual opinions openly. The same goes for other clansmen whose risk appetites aren't as great. I believe

that once an iconic Larkinson such as yourself joins our faction, we will be able to provide a voice for many aggrieved and uncertain clansmen."

Though Jannzi and the Purnesse Family hardly made any progress on this front, the expert pilot's personal life changed quickly after she married Adanau Purnesse.

Experiencing pregnancy and giving birth to her first baby son was one of the happiest and most memorable moments of her life.

As a woman born into the Larkinson Family, her aunts and uncles often emphasized how meaningful and important it was for her to prevent herself from losing herself in her duties as a soldier.

It wasn't until she started to raise her lovely little boy that the meaning of the word 'family' became a lot more personal and important to her very being.

"Mommy?"

"Yes, Mercer?" Venerable Jannzi smiled as she held her boy in her arms.

"Will you beat a lot of mechs today?"

"I will fight as many mechs as I have to, but that doesn't mean it is good for you to look forward to defeating as many enemies as possible."

"Huh?"

"We are committing a grave injustice to the people of this star system by invading their territory and threatening to destroy their homes and livelihoods. I already feel guilty for taking part in this attack at all, but I have little choice in the matter."

"Why is mommy sad? Mechs are so cool! I want to see mommy fight!"

The expert pilot exchanged a helpless glance with her husband. No matter how much they tried to shape the views of their young child, it was all too easy

for Mercer to inherit the love and enthusiasm for mechs and battle from other Larkinsons.

"Come back safely, okay?" Adenau softly requested after he kissed his wife.

"It is moments like these that I feel regret for not being able to fight myself."

The expert pilot hugged her child and husband one last time. "There is no need for you to fight. That is my job. I will try my best to come back alive, but I can never make any promises. There are times where my duty obliges me to stand my ground and fulfill my responsibilities even at great risk to my life."

"Why, Jannzi? Why are you willing to go so far?"

"Because I am a knight." She stated with utter conviction. "I am a protector of the weak and the guardian of the innocent. Though I do not agree with the decision to attack Pima Prime, I will still lend my strength to the clan, if only to shield our fellow clansmen from the consequences of provoking a fight against the Fridaymen."

This was the life of a soldier, a mech pilot and a knight.

She didn't get to choose the direction of the Larkinson Clan, but that did not stop her from fighting on its behalf.

After she finally parted with her husband and child, Jannzi lifted off from the deck and entered the cockpit of the Shield of Samar, she patiently waited until she received the order to activate her mech and sortie into space.

"Once more unto the breach, my old friend."

The Shield of Samar's powerful presence embraced Jannzi as if it was welcoming back a sister.

"We have a tough fight ahead of us, Sammie." Jannzi spoke in a familiar tone.

"OUR DUTY REMAINS THE SAME WHETHER WE FIGHT AGAINST MECHS, VORIBUGS OR PHASE WHALES. WE ARE THE SHIELD THAT PROVIDES COVER TO THOSE THAT CANNOT PROTECT THEMSELVES."

"I know. The enemy firepower will likely be great. The Sundered Phalanx will test our defenses more than the other enemies that we have confronted in the past."

"WE ARE NOT ALONE. THE AMOUNT OF OPPOSITION MAY BE GREAT, BUT WE HAVE ENOUGH COMRADES BY OUR SIDE. LET US FOCUS ON OUR OWN PERFORMANCE. THE GREATER OUR RESULTS, THE MORE OUR CLAN RESPECTS OUR STRENGTH. IT WILL BE EASIER FOR THE BOTH OF US TO REALIZE OUR GOALS IF WE CAN USE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PROVE THAT WE CAN DO MORE THAN LIFT OUR SHIELD AND RESIST INCOMING ATTACKS."

"That will depend on what the Fridaymen will do. We will be staying in the rear for the entire duration of the battle. To be honest, I hope the Sundered Phalanx will never be able to push close to our fleet. If the enemy mechs can get close enough to attack our ships, then something has gone seriously wrong for our clan."

The Shield of Samar's three eyes flashed with anticipation.

"THAT SHALL BE THE MOMENT WHERE WE WILL TRULY BE ABLE TO SHOWCASE OUR STRENGTH."

#### **Chapter 4314 Venerable Oskar Virathon**

The battle against the Sundered Phalanx initially proceeded according to Jannzi's expectations.

The massive, cumbersome battle lines of the Hex Army and the Sundered Phalanx collided against each other. The mech units from both sides then

proceeded to grind each other down like they had always done during the Komodo War.

It was not as if brilliant commanders from both sides attempted to pull off clever plans that allowed them to catch their enemies off-guard or outflank vulnerable enemy units.

However, when the scale of mech battles had grown to such an enormous extent, everything pretty much turned into a numbers game.

Even individual expert mechs weren't able to single-handedly affect the outcome of a massive mech battle anymore. The times where heroes such as Venerable Stark or Venerable Joshua could single-handedly collapse an entire enemy mech force were largely over now that the Larkinson Clan took part in battles of this scale.

Only ace pilots such as Patriarch Reginald Cross possessed enough overwhelming power to single-handedly determine victory or defeat amidst the collisions between hundreds of thousands of mechs!

When Venerable Jannzi witnessed the rapidly increasing scope of the battle unfolding before her eyes, she felt more insignificant than ever.

"DON'T GET DISTRACTED, PARTNER. THE ENEMY RANGED MECHS ARE DIRECTING THEIR FIREPOWER TOWARDS OUR SHIPS. WE MUST DO OUR BEST TO LIMIT THE DAMAGE."

"Right."

Jannzi's initial participation in the battle was not that exciting, but that was nothing new to knight mech pilots. They chose their specialization with the knowledge that they would have to perform some of the least desirable combat duties on the battlefield.



No mech pilot liked to put his or her mech in the line of fire and allow their machine to get pummeled without being able to counterattack.

A part of Jannzi even wished that the Design Department added a pair of shoulder-mounted guns to the Shield of Samar so that she could keep herself busy during times like these.

It was a pity that the clan neglected to do so during the latest upgrade round of the Shield of Samar.

The mech designers who upgraded her expert mech a few years ago largely preoccupied themselves with replacing the outdated internal parts and systems with modern, high-end heartland-level alternatives.

Many performance parameters shot up after this upgrade. Jannzi was particularly happy with the massive improvements to the mobility of her battle partner.

Aside from replacing the old and rather inadequate flight system with a heavy-duty model that produced much more thrust power at the cost of increased energy consumption, the Shield of Samar also gained the option of equipping its own minidrive!

The Skidrock AF-2 Heavy-Duty Combat Drive was yet another miniature warp drive that Morton Tech developed for the Larkinson Clan.

Compared to the Stiletto equipped by the Dark Zephyr provided by the same high-end equipment developer, the Skidrock Drive was built like a tank!

Larger and more powerful than any other combat drive developed for the Larkinson Clan, the Skidrock Drive possessed the power and the resilience to propel a heavy space knight across the battlefield and take a beating if necessary.

Of course, the Skidrock Drive also integrated a whopping 800 grams of phasewater in order to effectively enable warp travel for a machine as large and heavy as the Shield of Samar!

Venerable Jannzi did not expect her expert space knight to win a race against the Dark Zephyr anytime soon!

The Skidrock Drive was already sufficient for her needs.

In fact, she only activated it once for a brief moment of time when she needed to reposition from the Spirit of Bentheim to the Gorgoneion in order to provide cover for the Amaranto.

The only downside of the new Skidrock Drive was that mounting it on the back of the Shield of Samar prevented the Amaranto from merging its frame with the expert space knight.

This was not a serious loss. The Amaranto was still able to fire its Instrument of Vengeance while huddling behind the Shield of Samar. The two expert mechs just weren't able to share certain resources with each other.

After that, Jannzi returned to her original duty of guarding the flagship of the Larkinson Clan against concentrated enemy attacks.

Though she would have liked to keep Venerable Stark company for a longer period of time, her Shield of Samar would just get battered after enduring one attack after another from powerful enemy expert mechs such as the Star of Liberation.

Massive armored capital ships like the Graveyard and the Gorgoneion were designed to absorb as much firepower as possible. It was much easier and cheaper to replace their damaged hull plating than to fix up a powerful masterwork expert mech such as the Shield of Samar.

Jannzi waited for the moment where her defenses would truly be put to the test.

As the Battle of Pima Prime entered its middle stages, a lot of Larkinson expert mechs began to get embroiled in their respective bouts against the enemy counterparts.

The Sundered Phalanx all fielded their own collection of powerful and modern expert mech. Many of them possessed transphasic weapons and armor systems, which allowed them to give most Larkinson expert mechs a run for their money.

"Still, it looks like this battle is largely proceeding as expected." Jannzi concluded.

The Flagrant Vandals along with Venerable Tusa Billingsley-Larkinson managed to overrun the right flank a lot faster than anyone expected!

The fall of the famous Dukes and Hawkes duo along with the retreat of other expert mechs stationed on this side of the battlefield spelled the inevitable defeat of the Nidin Vergers and other nearby light units.

However, not everything was proceeding smoothly for the attacking forces.

The units stationed at the left flank were encountering a lot more resistance. The reason for that was that the Sundered Phalanx stationed considerably stronger expert mechs at that side.

The Larkinson Army soon came under much greater pressure due to several reasons.

First, the Tensars began to target Commander Casella Ingvar. This made the battle in the center a lot more complicated as the Arma Tensar and the Fila Tensar put heavy pressure on the only command-oriented expert mech of the Larkinson Clan!

Casella had little choice but to stop Commandeering ordinary Larkinson mech units so that she could channel much of her energies to her brother instead!

Venerable Jannzi would have preferred to reinforce the Ingvar siblings and help the Minerva brave the threat from the highly mobile and highly dangerous pair of enemy expert rifleman mechs!

Yet before she could do so, the main fleet suddenly faced a huge threat!

A single hostile high-tier expert mech broke through the faltering left flank and approached the main fleet at high speed!

The speed and power of this expert space knight along with fire support from the rear helped the threatening machine overcome every challenger in its way.

Though it wasn't an ace mech, its combat strength was so formidable that no other mech unit or expert mech could halt its advance!

For a moment, the Eye of Ylvaine along with other friendly ranged mech units attempted to intercept this powerful threat, but the offensive space knight either evaded the incoming attacks or easily resisted them with its resonance shield or its physical round shield.

General Verle quickly opened a communication channel with the Shield of Samar.

"Venerable Jannzi, the Skorpion Kommando is swinging in our direction. It is highly likely that Venerable Oskar Virathon is aiming to distract us and force us to recall some of our troops to save our fleet. Do not let him get his way and stop him from threatening our fleet. Do not let it get close enough to threaten our flagship!"

"Roger that, general. I am on my way. I can only stall it for a time, though. I will need additional help in order to restrain it further and tear it down."

"We will do our best to have Venerable Isobel Kotin back you up, but there is great demand for her firepower. We are in the process of recalling a part of the Battle Criers. They are on their way to give you aid."

"Do not leave me with the Skorpion Kommando for too long. A high-tier expert mech is too strong of an opponent."

Jannzi could already sense the threat from a distance. The Skorpion Kommando was one of the most threatening enemy machines alongside the Star of Liberation and the Shockshell.

The performance of the latter two gave her a much greater understanding of the threat posed by the Sundered Phalanx's high-tier expert mechs. The mechs themselves were constructed fairly well and their veteran expert pilots were absolutely at home on the battlefield!

"Let's go, Sammie."

"I WILL NOT TOLERATE THE INTRUSION OF ANY ENEMY SPACE KNIGHT." The Shield of Samar voiced.

The living expert mech already possessed a greater desire to defeat the Skorpion Kommando than its expert pilot!

While Jannzi just wanted to stall the Skorpion Kommando in order to buy time for others to take it down, the Shield of Samar wanted to do more!

It wanted to defeat the enemy high-tier expert mech by itself!

Venerable Jannzi thought that this was an incredibly absurd idea, but she didn't voice her skepticism even though the Shield of Samar clearly knew what she was thinking with the help of the man-machine connection.

Even so, that did not stop the two from working together and resonating with each other in order to meet the incoming threat on the best possible footing!

If this was the old days, it would have taken both mechs a long time to meet each other.

In fact, an expert medium offensive space knight such as the Skorpion Kommando would have easily been able to run circles around the Shield of Samar!

If Venerable Oskar Virathon didn't want to tussle against the Larkinson Clan's famous expert heavy space knight, then he could have easily bypassed the Shield of Samar.

The current mech generation changed many rules. Not every heavy space knight was as slow and lumbering as before.

The sixth revision of the Shield of Samar focused greatly on improving the mobility of the Shield of Samar in order to make it more practical in many battle scenarios.

Right now, Venerable Jannzi made excellent use of the latest changes by employing her expert mech's Skidrock Drive to rapidly accelerate away from the middle of the main fleet.

She needed to stop the Skorpion Kommando from getting any closer!

Strangely enough, despite the fact that the Skorpion Kommando actually possessed a clear advantage in mobility even with warp travel taken into account, the enemy expert mech made no attempts to circle around the Shield of Samar.

The enemy space knight headed directly towards the Larkinson space knight as soon as it had a clear line of sight of Jannzi's battle partner!

The hostility radiating from the Skorpion Kommando was palpable now. Venerable Oskar clearly had it out for the Shield of Samar!

"The nobility radiating from your fat and stupid machine is disgusting."  
Venerable Oskar sneered as he broadcasted his voice on an open channel. "I detest naive little knights like you. Let me teach you a lesson and correct your misguided views!"

"Don't call my Sammie fat!"

The two expert mechs did not make much effort to slow down their speeds as they entered into a collision course against each other!

Soon enough, both expert space knights crushed their resonance shields against each other with great force, triggering an energy eruption that temporarily engulfed the surrounding space with extraordinary energies!

Surprisingly enough, both mechs managed to surface the collision without suffering much damage.

This was not that big of a surprise as the Shield of Samar was an expert mech that was designed according to the concept of extreme defense.

The Skorpion Kommando on the other hand was a genuine high-tier expert mech controlled by an expert pilot that matched its strength.

The only actual result of this collision was that the two opposing machines had largely depleted each other's resonance shield, making it easy for them to inflict real damage against each other!

"You shall advance no further!"

"I shall tear off your face!"

### **Chapter 4315 Thick Defenses**

As far as expert mech battles went, the fight between the Shield of Samar and the Skorpion Kommando was not that exciting.

The only notable fact was that the Skorpion Kommando had advanced closer to the invading fleet than other mechs!

However, despite the fact that it had put itself into an extremely vulnerable position by extending so far away from friendly lines, Venerable Oskar Virathon did not take the threats around him seriously!

The reasons why he possessed such confidence was because of his unflinching confidence in his strength and the strength of his expert mech!

The Skorpion Kommando was arguably the most powerful melee expert mech on the battlefield.

In contrast to the Star of Liberation that reigned over longer distances or the Shockshell that possessed a broad array of armaments that made it viable at multiple ranges, the Skorpion Kommando was designed to function as a pure independent close-ranged assault machine.

It possessed an impressive degree of mobility for a space knight, but still retained much of the high defensive characteristics of defensive mechs.

What was even more unreasonable was that the Skorpion Kommando also possessed plenty of offensive power in the form of its thick and heavy sword along with its characteristic Skorpion Tail!

Venerable Jannzi deeply understood that an expert pilot that demanded to pilot a mech with such an aggressive configuration had no intention to protect other friendlies or cooperate with other comrades.

Just as its name suggested, the Skorpion Kommando was meant to function like a venomous predator that could single-handedly approach an enemy position and cause a lot of disruption.

Many nearby ranged mechs including the Transcendent Punishers Mark II's fielded by the Eye of Ylvaine found themselves unable to threaten the Skorpion Kommando!

"It's too tough and too fast!"



More ordinary ranged mechs such as the Rifle Warriors were completely unable to track the dizzyingly fast movements of the Skorpion Kommando. Though the enemy machine was classified as a space knight, much of its mobility characteristics matched a light skirmisher!

Even if the mechs managed to get lucky enough to get in a solid strike, the powerful defenses of the Skorpion Kommando effectively rendered the attack useless!

The Transcendent Punisher Mark II's attained better results, but it cost a lot for them to constantly try to foresee the Skorpion Kommando's incredibly agile movements.

General Verle eventually called the ranged mechs off. "Your firepower is needed to suppress the Blackened Reapers and the Witch Shatterers as well as provide fire support to our most hard-hit melee mech units. Leave the Skorpion Kommando be. The Shield of Samar is already locking it down and more appropriate help is already on the way."

The Skorpion Kommando posed a considerable headache for General Verle. Who knew what this enemy expert mech might do if it was able to approach a key capital ship such as the Spirit of Bentheim.

It would have been better to eliminate it right away, but the amount of assets needed to do so was so disproportionately high that other friendly units would lack the support they needed.

Therefore, a strange situation took place where the Skorpion Kommando no longer attracted as much firepower as before.

The pressure on Venerable Jannzi increased a lot as a consequence because her expert mech needed to prevent the Skorpion Kommando from getting any closer to the main fleet. The Shield of Samar also had to endure the powerful attacks of the enemy powerhouse as best as possible!

Two different resonance shields flared as the mechs exchanged powerful blows with each other.

The powerful blue glow around the Shield of Samar flared each time the Skorpion Kommando hacked at its target with its heavy sword.

The weapon seemed to have been designed to attack heavy targets as its unusually high density allowed it to hit as hard as an axe.

This was not a weapon designed for finesse!

The Unending alloy sword in the hands of the Shield of Samar was almost just as heavy and possessed unnatural sharpness courtesy of Ketis.

However, both mechs struck against each other with the flat of their blades because this was a better way to wear down the resonance shields of their opponents.

It took a long time for the two mechs to exhaust each other's initial defenses. The Skorpion Kommando was backed up by the willpower of a powerful high-tier expert pilot while the Shield of Samar was so large that it was able to provide plenty of support for its resonance shield.

The only strange part about this mutual exchange was that the Skorpion Kommando had yet to employ its infamous Skorpion Tail, but Jannzi knew it was only a matter of time before it would strike.

As the Skorpion Kommando kept bashing its sword against the Shield of Samar, Venerable Oskar Virathon continually built up his rage against his opponent.

"You are so weak, but your expert mech is too damn tough. Only a coward would fight inside a tortoise shell!"

The Shield of Samar's flared with anger as the living mech took offense to the Fridayman expert pilot's words.

Jannzi felt the need to shoot back. "Your attitude and your words betray your lack of honor. A true hero and defender would never forsake his allies and fly solo."

"YOU KNOW NOTHING, YOU LITTLE KID!"

Venerable Oskar became so stimulated by Jannzi's words that his expert mech exploded with power!

The sickly green glow surrounding the Skorpion Kommando grew brighter. The expert mech charged forward and used its round shield to collide against the Shield of Samar!

Not only that, the Skorpion Kommando increased the speed and power of its sword strikes, causing the Larkinson expert mech's resonance shield to weaken at a rapid rate!

"Is this the best you've got? Your attacks are only tickling my expert mech." Jannzi taunted as she deliberately sought to attract her opponent's hatred. "Your decision to challenge a defensive mech like mine is foolish. Your space knight doesn't have the power to threaten my battle partner."

To be honest, Venerable Oskar was genuinely surprised at how much damage the Shield of Samar was able to resist. He could clearly feel that Venerable Jannzi was still a fairly young and weak expert pilot. Her resonance strength may be fairly good among other Larkinson expert pilots, but she was completely unable to match his own power!

It was the expert mech itself that posed a huge amount of hindrance. As a heavy mech, many of its technical performance parameters were much higher than usual. The higher amounts of resonating exotics responsible for generating a resonance shield meant that it was much harder to exhaust this defensive layer than with lighter expert mechs.

On top of that, the Shield of Samar was also one of the most powerful living mechs of the Larkinson Clan.

It was old and had grown so much alongside Venerable Jannzi that it was finally starting to display the true potential of living mechs!

For example, one of the ways the Shield of Samar helped was to make it easier for Jannzi to resonate with it. Though the two weren't able to achieve Unity of Man and Machine under the current circumstances, they had come a lot closer to it than any other pairing on the battlefield!

The Shield of Samar in cooperation with Venerable Jannzi moved a bit faster, dealt a bit more damage with its sword strikes and most importantly enhanced its defenses to a greater degree than normal!

Normally, the power of the true resonance generated between an expert mech and an expert pilot was largely dependant on the latter's willpower alone, but this time it was different!

The formidable spiritual foundation of the Shield of Samar acted as an amplifier of Jannzi's resonance, allowing her to enhance her mech's performance by 20, 30 or even 40 percent depending on the exact function!

Much of the synergy generated by the two went on to enhance the defensive parameters of the Shield of Samar!

That wasn't all.

Unlike Venerable Orfan and Venerable Dise who tried not to rely too much on Qilanxo, Venerable Jannzi had no qualms about working together with the big lizard.

As Jannzi slowly deepened her cooperation with Qilanxo, the design spirit became more and more able to channel her power through the Shield of Samar.

Not only did Qilanxo help to weaken the resonance-empowered sword and shield strikes of the Skorpion Kommando, but she also began to project a thin spatial barrier that substantially bled away a considerable amount of incoming damage!

The Shield of Samar fully showcased its ability as one of the most exemplary living mechs of the Larkinson Clan!

Its triple classifications as an expert mech, a masterwork mech and a prime mech resulted in so much strengthening that it was able to endure much longer against a high-tier expert mech than usual!

Venerable Oskar's obsessive hatred against his opponent cooled a bit when he saw that his Skorpion Kommando still remained stuck at the same stage for over a minute.

This was a confounding result to him. The Shield of Samar was lasting a lot longer than it should, and much of it had to do with the other living entities he was able to sense inside the mech!

"I've met and fought against my fair share of living mechs, but yours is definitely the most disgusting of all! Do you think you can fend me off with additional help? Then think again!"

Oskar became so tired of the stacking defensive boosts of the Shield of Samar that he no longer cared about withholding his trump card.

The Skorpion Kommando did not come with too many bells and whistles in order to ensure that all of its basic parameters were as high as possible. The only real gimmick it possessed was its Skorpion Tail.

After Oskar resonated with this long and segmented limb, it shot forward with so much power and speed that it looked as if it had turned into a powerful beam of light as it struck against its target!

"No defense is impervious to my stinger!"

The Larkinson expert mech's resonance shield and other barriers immediately became so destabilized that they were unable to recover as quickly as before!

That wasn't the extent of the attack. It turned out that when the Skorpion Tail struck its target, the special stinger had discharged a special corrosive fluid that disrupted the functioning of the resonance shield.

Venerable Jannzi tried to get rid of the corrosive fluid, but it had spread out too quickly.

Soon enough, the Shield of Samar became exposed as its formidable resonance shield finally popped!

"Hah! The real game begins now!"

The Shield of Samar already stalled Venerable Oskar for quite some time. This was an unforgivably long delay as far as the Fridayman expert pilot was concerned.

The Skorpion Kommando began to hack at the Shield of Samar with even greater vigor than before, but the expert heavy space knight could rely on its thick and incredibly sturdy tower shield to block most of the incoming attacks!

The excellent toughness of Unending alloy made most incoming sword attacks ineffective.

No matter how much Oskar empowered his blows with his powerful true resonance, his sword wasn't able to dig as deeply into the Larkinson expert mech's tower shield as he wished.

"If you think a simple shield can stop me, then think again. I love tearing down shields like yours!"

The Skorpion Tail struck again, this time punching its sharp stinger as deep into the tower shield as possible!

The stinger released a different formula of corrosive fluid this time. Empowered by Venerable Oskar's formidable willpower, the substance turned into Unending alloy's nemesis and rapidly ate away a huge chunk of the tower shield!

A noticeably large and expanding gap had formed in the Shield of Samar's defensive equipment!

Ves, who had only mildly been paying attention to fight so far, reacted with utter shock and dismay at this outcome.

"No! How can so much Unending alloy melt away?!"

Unending alloy was an irreplaceable material to the Larkinson Clan. If chunks of it ever got lost, Ves had no way to get any replacements!

"Verle! Don't let the Shield of Samar sustain more damage! Hurry up and help Venerable Jannzi repel the Skorpion Kommando. We need to get rid of this scourge as soon as possible!"

If the Skorpion Kommando kept attacking the Shield of Samar with its lethal Skorpion Tail, tons of Unending alloy would corrode away by the end of the fight!

## THE MECH TOUCH

### Chapter 4316 Fatal Attraction

"THIS SKORPION KOMMANDO IS A NEMESIS AGAINST DEFENSIVE MECHS." The Shield of Samar spoke to its battle partner. "MY ARMOR CANNOT RESIST ITS VENOM."

Venerable Jannzi and her expert mech underestimated the potency of their opponent's stinger attack.

Master Charise Denton was not called the Viper for nothing. Her research and applications of corroding substances had reached such a high level that it appeared that not even Unending alloy could resist its powerful effect!

When empowered by Venerable Oskar's true resonance, this corrosive fluid was not only able to resist the attempts of Jannzi, the Shield of Samar and Qilanxo's attempts to weaken it, but also allowed the venom to break down the metals it came in touch with even faster!

Venerable Jannzi was horrified at how none of her defensive solutions were able to resist this insidious attack. Her distraction caused her Shield of Samar to show a gap which allowed her opponent to claim the initiative!

The Skorpion Kommando became a lot more violent as it struck at the melted and damaged portions of the tower shield with its heavy sword, intent on breaking apart this physical barrier as fast as possible!

A space knight without a physical shield was much less capable of performing its defensive duties than normal.

The Shield of Samar would definitely be much less capable of withstanding the Skorpion Kommando's attacks if that happened!

The renewed threat assessment of the Skorpion Kommando prompted the Larkinson Clan to finally bring over additional support.

It did not take long for a series of purple light beams to strike the Skorpion Kommando's resonance shield!

Initially, Venerable Oskar did not pay too much attention to the attacks. His strong willpower easily snuffed out the purple flames that threatened to deal additional damage similar to his expert mech's venom.

However, much of that changed when the distant expert rifleman mech began to adopt a different sort of attack.



The light beams that struck the Skorpion Kommando next caused powerful energy explosions upon impact!

Though these strikes did not leave any lingering flames behind, the immediate release of explosive potential were draining the Skorpion Kommando's powerful resonance shield at a rapid rate despite the relative weakness of the attacking expert mech!

"You Larkinson mechs bring out one surprise after another." The Fridayman expert pilot remarked with notable irritation.

The new light beams drained his expert mech's resonance shield a lot faster than usual, which meant that Oskar had to take the new attacks a lot more seriously.

The Promethea kept putting the Skorpion Kommando under a lot of pressure with its abnormally effective energy attacks.

"I've been tasked with backing you up, Jannzi." Venerable Isobel Kotin spoke. "As you can see, my Promethea has enough firepower to pose a threat to the Skorpion Kommando. As long as you can hold it back, I can keep firing with impunity!"

Venerable Jannzi finally smiled. "Thank you, Isobel, but maintain your distance as best as possible. I am not sure I can keep the Skorpion Kommando pinned."

The two were highly familiar with each other. They practiced alongside each other many times in the MSTS, which meant that they both knew exactly what they needed to do in order to complete their objectives.

The Shield of Samar no longer shouldered the main responsibility of wearing down the Skorpion Kommando's defenses. It instead began to adopt a much more defensive posture. It had to last as long as possible while also ensuring that its opponent did not gain an opportunity to slip away.

The Promethea on the other hand was responsible for grinding down the Skorpion Kommando and disabling important parts and systems once they became exposed.

With the help of the knowledge and techniques imparted by the Alfari Corps Detonation Code Fruit, Venerable Isobel was able to channel the firepower of her Promethea in a way that the Skorpion Kommando couldn't resist as well.

No matter how much Venerable Oskar tried to weaken the incoming attacks with his willpower, the frequent and instant explosions happened so quickly that he wasn't able to mitigate the damage.

Soon enough, the Skorpion Kommando's resonance shield broke!

Venerable Isobel smirked and slowed down her Promethea's firing rate in order to allow her mech rifle to charge up its attacks.

The positron beams struck the transphasic armor of the Skorpion Kommando and exploded upon impact, causing the enemy expert space knight to pay more attention to exposing its more critical parts.

When Oskar saw that the explosive energy beam attacks were actually capable of damaging the powerful and resilient transphasic armor plating of his expert mech, he regarded the Promethea as an acute threat!

This was highly unusual as a mid-tier expert mech piloted by a rather new low-tier expert pilot shouldn't be able to inflict so much damage to a high-tier expert mech like the Skorpion Kommando.

The Larkinson Clan constantly broke the rules concerning mechs!

The firepower of Venerable Isobel's expert mech was so threatening that the Skorpion Kommando didn't even dare to expose its back to the incoming shots.

This considerably limited the Skorpion Kommando's range of movement and offensive power.

After enduring one powerful attack after another, Venerable Oskar couldn't take it any longer. He finally shifted his target away from the damaged but still vigorous Shield of Samar!

"Since you are so eager to rely on backup to take me down, let me tear down your friend first!"

By this time, the tower shield that Jannzi relied upon to defend against the onslaught of her opponent already exhibited multiple large and messy holes in the center area.

Though the attack frequency of the Skorpion Tail wasn't high, it was able to punch through and corrode a lot of solid materials within seconds!

Already the Shield of Samar's burden had lightened considerably because so much Unending alloy had just melted away!

When the Skorpion Kommando attempted to bypass the Shield of Samar and soar straight towards the Promethea in the distance, Venerable Jannzi was not about to let her opponent leave.

"Stay!"

The Shield of Samar tried its best to stay in the way of the Skorpion Kommando, but this was a rather futile endeavor considering that the latter was considerably faster and more mobile.

As a lighter and more compact space knight, the Skorpion Kommando possessed a considerable advantage in acceleration. It was able to speed itself up a lot faster!

Though the Shield of Samar was a lot more sluggish and ponderous in space, Venerable Jannzi and her expert mech still had a way to keep their opponent in place.

Jannzi resonated with her expert mech in a different way. Her mind and will touched on the GT-535 integrated in the powerful machine.

Master Moira Willix of the MTA personally developed this resonating alloy in the past. It was considerably more powerful than most other resonating materials employed by other Larkinson expert mechs.

What was even better was that both Jannzi and Qilanxo just happened to be compatible with this powerful resonating alloy!

The Shield of Samar instantly seemed to gain a lot of mass all of a sudden. It was as if the defensive mech turned itself into a black hole that suck in everything in its reach!

A powerful gravitic force acted upon the retreating Skorpion Kommando!

"Fatal Attraction!"

The resonating ability activated by the Shield of Samar solely acted upon the Skorpion Kommando by leashing it with a powerful gravitational pull.

The effectiveness of the Fatal Attraction resonating ability was highly dependent on range.

The closer the enemy mech, the harder it was for the targeted machine to escape the artificial gravity well!

"Annoying woman." Oskar cursed as he tried his best to break this extraordinary application of resonance with his willpower. "Nothing shall bind me in place!"

His aversion to getting trapped was so great that his willpower partially resisted the powerful resonating ability acting upon his expert mech!

The Skorpion Kommando could not be held in place despite the rather limited distance between the two machines!

Of course, the Shield of Samar did not stay still all this time. It quickly repositioned itself so that it continued to block the Skorpion Kommando's way.

A minute went by as the Skorpion Kommando continued its attempt to break free. Naturally, it also struck the Shield of Samar plenty of times since it was so effective at preventing Oskar from doing what he wanted.

The Skorpion Kommando in the meantime began to accrue a steady amount of damage. Though the Shield of Samar was unable to inflict significant damage the high-tier expert mech, the Promethea was making steady progress in wearing down its target's thick shell!

The Skorpion Kommando's round shield began to exhibit more and more holes and craters as explosive beams kept striking its surface.

It was clear that the Promethea needed to launch a lot of attacks in order to truly defeat the expert offensive space knight, but at least Venerable Isobel was making progress.

At some point, Venerable Oskar Virathon became so frustrated by the constant gravity pull generated by his first opponent that his force of will exploded with anger!

"I SHALL NOT BE BOUND!"

A powerful green explosion erupted from the frame of the Skorpion Kommando!

The eruption temporarily broke the gravity pull acting upon the expert space knight, allowing it to shoot away and build up enough distance to approach the Promethea!

"Run, Isobel! I can't hold the Skorpion Kommando anymore!"

Venerable Jannzi became a lot more desperate as she saw that this powerful threat had gotten loose!

Though her Shield of Samar had managed to withstand the Skorpion Kommando's attacks for an admirable period of time, this was because the living mech excelled at defense.

The Promethea was entirely different!

As long as the Skorpion Tail managed to sting the Promethea a single time, it was doubtful whether Venerable Isobel's expert mech would be able to remain combat effective!

Venerable Jannzi urged her battle partner to activate the Skidrock Drive and catch up to the Skorpion Kommando as best as possible, but the speed disparity between the two machines was too great!

When every expert mech involved in this bout possessed warp travel capabilities, the factors that determined their relative superiority in mobility largely relied upon other factors.

The Shield of Samar was the slowest because it was so big and massive.

The Skorpion Kommando was the fastest because it possessed a balanced, high-end configuration and because a high-tier expert pilot amplified its performance.

The Promethea was almost just as fast as its opponent due to its lighter and slimmer frame, but its other advantages weren't as great!

Seeing that the Skorpion Kommando was steadily gaining on the Promethea, Venerable Jannzi knew they had to change their approach.

"Isobel, swing around and take shelter behind my expert mech." Jannzi urged over the communication channel. "It will be much harder for the Skorpion Kommando to target you if I'm close."

"Are you sure about that, Jannzi? The Skorpion Kommando is too dangerous at close range."

"I can't cover for you if you are too far away."

"You have a point."

Venerable Isobel Kotin changed the flight course of the Promethea and clearly attempted to circle around in an attempt to meet up with the Shield of Samar.

The Skorpion Kommando tried its best to prevent its two opponents from uniting with each other, but it didn't work.

Venerable Oskar paused for a moment before he scoffed.

"Hmph. So what if the two of you met up with each other. I can still destroy you both!"

The Skorpion Kommando charged forward and slammed its physical shield against the damaged tower shield of Jannzi's expert mech!

At the same time, the Skorpion Tail struck yet again!

The tower shield was already in a pretty bad shape, but the two powerful strikes finally caused the center of the object to break!

Two large and heavy pieces of thick Unending alloy floated off into space as the Shield of Samar just lost its main defensive tool!

Venerable Oskar grinned at the sight. "There is nothing you can do to stop me from destroying your friend. The more you stand in my way, the more I will make you suffer! No knight mech is allowed to succeed in my presence!"

"What is your problem, Oskar?!"

**Chapter 4317 Knightly Virtues**



A dance between three expert mechs quickly commenced.

The Promethea used the Shield of Samar as a pillar and constantly rotated around the expert space knight as it continually struck the Skorpion Kommando with exploding energy beam attacks.

The Shield of Samar tried to lock down the Skorpion Kommando or at least slow its attempts to circle around to strike at the Promethea directly, but Venerable Jannzi found it incredibly difficult to keep the enemy high-tier expert mech under control.

Venerable Oskar Virathon was just too strong!

Though he was not as advanced as Venerable Rebecca Andus, he still possessed the capital of a high-tier expert pilot.

As he became more accustomed to the Shield of Samar's ability to pull his Skorpion Kommando closer with the power of gravity, he became more proficient with countering this effect.

It became harder and harder for Jannzi to keep the Skorpion Kommando contained!

"He's too strong! I can't slow him down that much anymore!"

Jannzi and the Shield of Samar's attempts to slow down the Skorpion Kommando was as difficult as a human trying to stop a rampaging bull.

When the difference in power between two entities were too great, the efforts of the weaker party only had minimal effect. This was unfortunately the case for Venerable Jannzi as her resonance strength and willpower development simply couldn't keep up against her current opponent.

The Skorpion Kommando wasn't interested in destroying the Shield of Samar at all. Even if Jannzi's expert mech had just lost its tower shield, it still featured a lot of bulk on its frame that would take multiple attacks to overcome.



Even if the Skorpion Kommando managed to get through the remaining defenses of the Shield of Samar, the Promethea would have inflicted a lot of damage by this time.

Venerable Isobel Kotin's new explosive attack method were already dealing substantial amounts of damage to the Skorpion Kommando's round shield.

The shield was not as thick and resilient as Jannzi's Unending alloy tower shield. Sooner or later, the Promethea would be able to chew through it and attack the more important parts of the Skorpion Kommando!

Venerable Oskar Virathon only became angrier and more determined to take out Venerable Isobel Kotin than ever as a result!

"I used to be like you once, Jannzi." He spoke as his expert space knight attempted to bypass the Shield of Samar and strike the Promethea with his Skorpion Tail. "I used to be a brave and honest knight mech pilot who put my life before the lives of others."

"What changed? What caused you to build up so much resentment?" Jannzi asked as she did not let up in her attempts to block and stall her opponent.

"MY COMRADES LEFT ME BEHIND, THAT WAS WHAT HAPPENED TO ME!" Venerable Oskar exploded! "When the Hex Army was on the verge of overrunning our mech units, a group of friends and I volunteered to act as the rear guard and buy time for the rest of our troops to reorganize and launch a counterattack."

"Let me guess. That counterattack never came, right?"

"My own commander left us for dead! That bastard lied to me! He told me he would come back and help me defeat the advancing Hexer troops, but what he actually did was order a hasty retreat, relying on me and the rest of the rearguard to give him an opportunity to save his own cowardly skin!"

"I'm sorry to hear that, Oskar, but a knight must help regardless of how he or she is treated. Your actions must have saved the lives of many Fridaymen mech pilots who would have otherwise perished, thereby causing your state to suffer a lot more losses than otherwise."

Though Venerable Jannzi wasn't entirely certain whether she would be willing to delay the enemy under those circumstances, her principles would have compelled her to stall the pursuing enemies if her services were necessary.

"THAT IS PURE NONSENSE!" Oskar furiously responded to Jannzi's remark. "I am an expert pilot! My value is greater than thousands of regular mech pilots. Not even mech officers are as indispensable as me. Those cowards who discarded me like a pawn should have been the ones to stall the closing Hexer mechs instead! It is their job to serve as cannon fodder so that strong demigods like myself can stay alive and contribute much more to my state!"

Venerable Jannzi almost couldn't believe what she heard. What Oskar had just said went against everything a knight pilot stood for! The extreme selfishness and lack of care that her opponent directed towards his 'lessers' was appalling!

"You... are everything a knight pilot must avoid."

"Don't bother with trying to shame me." Oskar contemptuously said. "Knightly virtues are horribly outdated! All of those rules and customs that the knight pilot community attempts to saddle onto us are nothing but cynical attempts to brainwash us into cannon fodder. In the eyes of other people, the only purpose of mechs with shields and high defenses is to act as mobile punching bags!"

"That... that's a lie!"

"It's the truth, you naive woman! Just ask your own leaders, if you dare. None of them respect you as a warrior that deserved to be treated with as much

dignity as other expert pilots. They merely see you as a defensive asset that they can use up as they wish. Take this battle for example! Aside from sending you a single expert rifleman mech, all of the other Larkinson mechs around here are completely ignoring what is happening to you! They would rather fire their guns elsewhere than to

Venerable Jannzi briefly paused for a moment as she couldn't help but harbor a bit of doubt.

This tiny interval briefly caused the Shield of Samar to slacken for an instant.

Venerable Oskar keenly recognized this weakness and instantly burst out his willpower!

"BREAK!"

His Skorpion Kommando unleashed another true resonance blast that broke the gravity pull on it once again!

This allowed the Fridayman expert mech to finally bypass the Shield of Samar and approach the Promethea!

"Isobel!"

"I'm not that helpless at close range!"

As the Skorpion Kommando came awfully close, the Promethea suddenly lifted up its two arms and activated its wrist-mounted flamethrower modules!

Two incredibly hot streams of purple flames completely engulfed the space in front of it with overwhelming heat!

Venerable Oskar was caught off-guard as his Skorpion Kommando entered head-long into the expanding flames!

The propellant formula utilized by the Promethea was extremely expensive and fairly difficult to buy on the market.

However, it was especially formulated to fight against expert mechs. Though the Skorpion Kommando was way too tough for the flames to burn it down in a short amount of time, the hot flames temporarily blinded its sensors, causing it to lose sight of the Promethea!

By the time the Skorpion Kommando escaped the flame cloud, its target had already taken shelter behind the Shield of Samar again.

The Skorpion Kommando suffered light burn damage across its frame, mostly because Isobel's willpower was incomparable to that of Oskar.

"Nice trick, lady, but it won't work again." Oskar stated as his Skorpion Kommando resumed its offensive as if nothing had happened.

The two Larkinson expert mechs continued to struggle in their attempts to hold back the powerful enemy machine.

The Skorpion Kommando eventually lost its shield after it endured too many attacks from the Promethea.

This allowed Venerable Isobel to target the exposed frame of the Skorpion Kommando.

Unfortunately for her, Venerable Oskar always made sure that his expert space knight never exposed its back.

The frontal armor of the Skorpion Kommando was still strong!

The powerful high-tier expert mech didn't seem to have weakened in the slightest after losing its physical shield.

Instead, the absence of this sizable object seemed to have liberated it a bit. It became a bit faster and more agile. If not for its relatively sturdy frame, it could have been mistaken for an expert swordsman mech!

Though Venerable Oskar hadn't been able to fulfill his wish of striking down the Promethea, he was still able to inflict a steady amount of damage onto the Shield of Samar.

The latter's Unending alloy armor system withstood the edge of the transphasic heavy sword fairly well, mostly by virtue of its thickness and excellent material hardness.

Unfortunately for Jannzi, the famed strength of Unending alloy appeared to be completely helpless whenever the Skorpion Tail struck with great force!

Each time this strange limb struck the Shield of Samar, its stinger pierced through the upper layer and punched deep enough to inject a sizable amount of corrosive fluids.

Empowered by Venerable Oskar's formidable will, the Skorpion Kommando's venom rapidly ate away just as much Unending alloy as before.

It was as if the Viper specially formulated a substance that was solely designed to destroy the Unending alloy that the Larkinson Clan famously employed!

While a certain mech designer was wailing at the sight of so much Unending alloy being melted away, the Skorpion Kommando finally managed to get past the lumbering expert space knight and gain a chance to strike at the Promethea once again!

Though Venerable Isobel's expert mech let loose with its pair of flamethrowers once again, Venerable Oskar already anticipated this move.

The Skorpion Kommando did not advance straight towards the Promethea but took a detour and circled around once again, allowing it to escape most of the flames!

"Isobel!"

The Skorpion Kommando struck the Promethea's resonance shield with both its sword and its Skorpion Tail!

This time, the latter sprayed a formula that was especially designed to destabilize and drain resonance shields.

Though the Promethea's ability to resist incoming damage was not as bad as the old Amaranto, it was still rather deficient in this aspect due to emphasizing offense.

The Skorpion Kommando not only let its corrosive venom do its work, but also bashed the Promethea's resonance shield with repeated powerful sword strikes!

"Get away from my friend!"

The Shield of Samar eventually caught up and physically pushed the Skorpion Kommando away!

"Haha! You can't stop me, little knight! You're only delaying the inevitable!"

Though it took a bit of time, the Skorpion Kommando soon managed to escape the entanglement of the Shield of Samar once again!

After ignoring and fending off the flames unleashed by the Promethea, the Skorpion Kommando launched another flurry of attacks that finally broke the former's resonance shield!

Venerable Oskar had been waiting for this moment. Now that the Promethea had no other protection left aside from its thin and inadequate transphasic armor system, the dreaded Skorpion Tail arced forward with incredible speed and power!

The Promethea lifted up its powerful Ignitron luminar crystal rifle in an attempt to use it as a makeshift shield, but the segmented Skorpion Tail easily twitched and bypassed this pathetic obstacle!

"THE MODERN KNIGHT IS DEAD!" Venerable Oskar viciously stated!

"KNIGHTS NEVER FIGHT ALONE!" Venerable Jannzi roared!

The Shield of Samar glowed with resonance a short instance before the Skorpion Tail could strike at the Promethea.

Jannzi not only connected deeper with her expert mech than ever before, but also established a closer connection with Qilanxo!

The shadow of a giant reptilian exobeast appeared above the Shield of Samar!

"PRIMAL AEGIS!"

The masterwork expert mech began to embody Qilanxo to a greater degree, allowing the design spirit to extend a more distant spatial barrier that covered the Promethea just in time!

The Skorpion Tail struck the spatial barrier with such great force that it quickly collapsed. This defensive measure was not strong enough to stop the strongest attack from a high-tier expert mech!

Due to this brief blockade, the Skorpion Tail had lost a lot of power and speed.

Even so, the delay was so minimal that it still went on to strike the Promethea, though its stinger failed to punch as deeply into the transphasic armor plating of its target than intended.

A dangerous amount of corrosive fluids splashed across the surface of the expert rifleman mech. The machine could do little to nothing to stop the substance from spreading and corroding the armor.

The fact that it was transphasic only mildly slowed down the progress of this attack!

Though the weakened strike failed to cripple the Promethea in a single blow as Oskar intended, the attack still managed to eat through the Larkinson expert mech's exterior and damage a part of its internals.

The Promethea's performance quickly dropped!

"My mech is hit!"

### **Chapter 4318 Who Dares**

Unlike the Shield of Samar, the Promethea did not possess the ability to resist sustained enemy attacks, especially once it expended its resonance shield.

Though its transphasic armor system gave it a moderate advantage against opponents that did not possess any transphasic capabilities themselves, it was unfortunate that the Gauge Dynasty happened to be one of the parties that invested a lot into them since its agents first stepped foot into the Red Ocean!

The research and development they allocated to phasewater and its many applications far exceeded that of the Larkinson Clan or any other private organization. As the Gauge Dynasty was as large as a medium-sized state by itself, it had no lack of senior scientists and capable research institutions.

The Gauger mech designers were the most enthused about phasewater technology out of almost anyone else. The Masters among them eagerly experimented with all of the new possibilities that phasewater opened up. Their superior transhuman capabilities also allowed them to learn and master the uses of this complex substance a lot faster than other researchers!

Combined with the fact that the Gauge Dynasty managed to lay claim to numerous colonies that possessed phasewater deposits of varying sizes, the Sundered Phalanx managed to modernize all of its expert mechs with remarkable speed.



The Skorpion Kommando was stronger than anyone expected. The main reason for that had to do with the Skorpion Tail and the 'venom' it was able to inject into its victims.

According to the intelligence leaks that the Larkinsons based their battle plans upon, the Skorpion Kommando was able to deal heavy damage to exposed expert mechs, but none of the planners ever imagined that its venom could turn the Promethea into a burden with just a surface attack!

If the Shield of Samar hadn't activated its Primal Aegis ability with the help of its design spirit, the stinger would have been able to pierce into the Promethea's armor and inject much of that venom into the expert rifleman mech's crucial internals, thereby disabling it outright!

"This shouldn't be possible!" Ves exclaimed. "The Promethea's transphasic armor system is not a piece of cabbage. Its resistance against corrosion-based attacks should have been much greater!"

The Fridayman expert mechs that the Viper designed in the past did feature highly effective corrosive fluid formulas that had managed to dissolve the armor of many powerful Hexer expert mechs, but these incidents took place in a time where phasewater technology had not spread to the galactic rim of the old galaxy.

It did not take long until the Larkinson researchers found out why the Skorpion Kommando possessed such abnormally high effectiveness against modern expert mechs.

"The new corrosive fluid formulas employed by the Skorpion Kommando are laced with phasewater!"

"What?!" Ves looked surprised when he heard this report. "Even if that is the case, they still shouldn't have been able to eat through both Unending alloy plating and transphasic armor plating so quickly!"

"That is normally the case, but according to an intelligent report from a handful of our Black Cats on the ground, a department of the Sundered Phalanx transferred over a kilogram's worth of phasewater to the space station where the Skorpion Kommando was stationed. We believe that the Gaugers augmented the Skorpion Kommando's stock of venom with as much phasewater they are able to carry in a short amount of time!"

"Damn it!"

This was a brilliant move from the enemy! A huge trading hub like Pima Prime most certainly accumulated a lot of kilograms of phasewater.

The Gauge Dynasty probably prioritized the evacuation of most of it because of their value and because of the difficulty of converting them into anything useful.

Though it would have been great if the locals were able to fabricate stronger and more extravagant transphasic parts for their expert mechs, the invading forces arrived too quickly for the Sundered Phalanx to upgrade all of their expert mechs.

However, it was still possible for the high-end laboratories on Pima Prime V to produce enhanced corrosive fluids in a hurry, especially if the Viper had already developed the higher-end formulas in advance!

Ves already gained a fairly deep cognition of how the introduction of phasewater would change battles between human mech forces forever. The Skorpion Kommando was nominally an expert space knight, which was supposed to be the least threatening mech type among this category of high-end machines.

Yet by sticking the Skorpion Tail on its back and reserving enough room to contain a reservoir of phasewater-laced corrosive substances, the expert

space knight became even more dangerous than the Shockshell at close range!

"Combat between transphasic mechs is largely a competition between who is willing to squander more money. The side with the biggest wallet will often gain the upper hand!"

This was the most painful part about mech combat in the phasewater era. The Larkinson Clan and the rest of the Golden Skull Alliance managed to luck out because they managed to plunder huge amounts of phasewater during the Purgatory Campaign.

If Ves hadn't pushed to go on a small mission to a star system that just happened to contain a hidden phase whale enclave, the Larkinson Clan would have never been able to invest in so many powerful transphasic expert mechs.

This would have put the level of its expert mechs at the same height as that of other medium-sized private organizations.

In an alternate reality where the Golden Skull Alliance never commenced the Purgatory Campaign, its mech forces would have never been able to compete against state-backed military forces such as the Sundered Phalanx. The disparity in resources would have been too great!

When Ves figured this out, he felt vindicated for pushing his clan and its allies to not hole up in Davute all of the time.

Sure, the Larkinson Clan would have definitely been able to develop at a steady trajectory by relying on the growing commercial success of the Living Mech Corporation, but how could the Larkinsons ever catch up to the likes of the Fridaymen and other larger players that had access to a lot more population, territory, resources and funding?

If Ves did not want his clan to remain vulnerable to the predation of these larger players, he needed to accelerate the growth of his own mech legions.

Perhaps the performance of the Larkinson Army was quite good during this battle, but that was only because the Hex Army locked down the bulk of the Sundered Phalanx mech divisions.

As groups like the Gauge Dynasty began to adopt phasewater technology on a wider scale, an even greater separation would take place between the bigger players and the smaller players.

Ordinary mercenary outfits and security companies did not have enough access to phasewater!

A lot of phasewater harvested from places like the Friday Colonies were internally consumed, which meant that they rarely got sold on the open market.

The market price for phasewater became ridiculously high for this reason as only an overwhelming premium would convince parties to sell a portion of their reserves to their rivals and competitors.

All of this meant that the importance of gaining a stable supply of phasewater became more important than ever.

Ves underestimated the value of concluding a business transaction with the Hex Federation. He was lucky that the Hexers valued his Mental Simulation Training System so highly that they were willing to pay 5 kilograms of phasewater to gain access to this revolutionary training method!

"I need to expand the market for my MSTS." Ves immediately concluded.

"There is no better way for my clan to earn a steady supply of phasewater. I need to play to my advantages."

As Ves continued to think about the importance of obtaining more phasewater to strengthen his forces, Venerable Jannzi and Venerable Isobel were enduring a lot more pressure than before!

When the Promethea got splattered with the Skorpion Kommando's phasewater-rich corrosive fluid, a third of its front and a noticeable amount of internals got dissolved.

This not only opened up a serious weak point in its armor coverage, but also degraded its overall performance parameters by a third!

This drop in performance was extremely serious, and turned the Promethea into a notable liability when fighting against a powerful high-expert mech.

The Promethea was no longer as fast as before due to the damage it sustained, so it became a lot more difficult for Venerable Isobel's expert mech to maintain its distance from the Skorpion Kommando!

Venerable Isobel endured life-threatening pressure as she piloted her damaged machine to the best of her abilities. More and more of her potential became unleashed as she tried to squeeze as much power as she could from the Promethea.

Her application of the mysterious methods derived from the Alfari Corps Detonation Code abruptly reached a higher level as she gained inspiration during this battle!

"There is still more I can do!"

She even deepened her cooperation with Zeiga and the Illustrious One, both of whom did not want to see an expert mech that they oversaw as its design spirits fall in its first proper battle!

It was a pity that none of their measures were enough. The Promethea hit harder and inflicted almost just as much damage as before to the exterior of the Skorpion Kommando despite the noticeable drop in power.

Yet the Skorpion Kommando easily endured all of the attacks. Even if its thick frontal armor was beginning to chip away due to getting stuck by repeated explosive energy beam attacks, there were still plenty of layers of hardy transphasic armor left!

Though Venerable Isobel tried her best to concentrate the Ignitron rifle's resonance-empowered attacks onto key targets such as the hands, or the infamous Skorpion Tail, Venerable Oskar always managed to mitigate them by moving his expert mech just a tiny bit out of the way.

"You are 50 years too young to cripple my mech!"

In contrast to Venerable Isobel's relatively unimpressive results, Venerable Jannzi was able to achieve much more results.

The Shield of Samar received a lot more abuse due to receiving the brunt of the Skorpion Kommando's attacks, but the Larkinson expert mech's thick frontal armor and abundant amount of mass made it so that any Skorpion Tail attack only ended up dissolving buffer material rather than more important internal components.

As long as the Shield of Samar was able to retain full power and functionality, it possessed the capital to slow down the Skorpion Kommando, especially now that Venerable Jannzi had fully woken up and exceeded her previous limitations!

The stakes of the battle along with the need to protect Venerable Isobel and her weakened Promethea drove Venerable Jannzi's willpower to new heights.

Alongside that, the Shield of Samar and Qilanxo both deepened their cooperation with their long-standing partner, allowing the trio to develop a more extensive degree of cooperation!

The most drastic benefits of their greater synergies was that the Shield of Samar's true resonance had become stronger and more condensed.

Jannzi's stronger willpower amplified every performance parameter of her expert mech to a greater degree, allowing the Shield of Samar to move faster and exert a stronger gravitic attraction force on the Skorpion Kommando!

"Let go, you stupid woman!"

Despite Venerable Oskar's best attempts to break the Fatal Attraction resonating ability that was preventing the Skorpion Kommando from chasing after the Promethea, his breakout trick no longer worked as effectively as before.

Part of that was because his previous outburst had tired out his strong but still finite willpower.

Another part of it was because Jannzi and Qilanxo had amplified the power of Fatal Attraction!

This was not sustainable though as the amount of exertion required to restrict the movement of a high-tier expert mech was too great for Venerable Jannzi!

"I can't hold the Skorpion Kommando for long." She gritted her teeth. "We need to take it down quickly."

Venerable Isobel quickly made an estimate but shook her head. "My firepower isn't high enough. The Skorpion Kommando's armor is just too strong."

Just as the two Larkinson expert pilots were trying to come up with desperate measures, over a hundred slicer beams struck the Skorpion Kommando and the area around the enemy expert mech!

"WHO DARES?!" Venerable Oskar shouted as the narrow energy beams managed to bite deeper into the armor of his expert mech than they should!

"It's... it's the Battle Criers!" Venerable Isobel's expression lifted up. "Our reinforcements have arrived!"

### **Chapter 4319 Nullifier Battalion**

The Battle Criers was one of the least notable mech legions of the Larkinson Clan.

Much like the Avatars of Myth, the Battle Criers got outshone by the much more impressive Swordmaidens and Penitent Sisters in the battles that the Larkinson Clan fought in the past.

It didn't help that the Battle Criers were smaller in scale and notoriously insular. Their background, martial traditions and subculture deviated so much from the rest of the clan that few Larkinsons took them seriously.

This was despite the fact that the Battle Criers were also responsible for organizing the honor guards of important clan figures such as the clan patriarch and his immediate family!

Naturally, Ves did not wish to see the Battle Criers suffer in neglect. He had spent a considerable amount of time during the Larkinson Clan's stay in Davute to help with reorganizing Battle Criers and finding a new role for them that allowed them to stand out within the Larkinson Army.

The decision that Ves had made was to orient the Battle Criers towards countering extraordinary threats.

None of the other mech legions were especially geared towards fighting against dark gods, expert mechs and other extraordinary threats.

The only solutions that the Larkinson Army could deploy against these kinds of powerful opponents were its modest amount of expert mechs.



Though the Larkinsons invested heavily in the development of their expert mechs, it was impossible for Ves to put all of his eggs in a single basket.

What if they ended up in a situation where they ran out of expert mechs?

What if the strength of an enemy spiritual entity was too strong?

If Ves had the option to expand the amount of options for his troops to respond to these kinds of overwhelming threats, then he would be stupid to ignore it in favor of investing all of his hopes on his expert mechs!

As such, Ves supplied the Battle Criers with an experimental mech model that possessed a couple unique features that made them particularly suited to fight against expert mechs!

"The Nullifier mechs have come!"

Though Venerable Jannzi and Venerable Isobel weren't certain whether the reinforcements dispatched by the Battle Criers could pose a sufficient threat towards the Skorpion Kommando, their firepower at least spread the burden and help with constraining this powerful machine even further!

As the distant Battle Crier mechs continued to fire at the Skorpion Kommando with repeated attacks, it became more and more clear that their attacks weren't like the ones fired by other mech units.

For example, the attacks launched by the Rifle Warriors missed their mark most of the time as their mech pilots simply weren't able to track and predict the Skorpion Kommando's fast and erratic movements.

The Transcendent Punisher Mark II's fielded by the Eye of Ylvaine were able to attain a considerably higher hit rate, but Skorpion Kommando easily resisted the cannon fire by relying on its transphasic armor system.

As an expert space knight, the Skorpion Kommando's defensive systems were among the best of all of the Sundered Phalanx expert mechs on the battlefield!

Though Venerable Oskar was no longer able to put up a resonance shield for the time being, he was still able to reinforce his expert mech's armor system with true resonance, thereby drastically weakening every mundane attack that did not have the support of extraordinary willpower.

In short, these defensive enhancements practically made the Skorpion Kommando immune to regular firepower!

Venerable Oskar wouldn't have dared to travel so deeply behind enemy lines if he did not have the confidence to evade or withstand so many attacks!

The best way for the ranged mechs of the Larkinson Army to pose a serious threat to such a powerful high-tier expert mech was to employ transphasic weapons.

The Larkinson Clan was not comfortable with expending its finite reserves of phasewater to augment its ordinary mech units. The Avatars of Myth and the Eye of Ylvaine didn't get their wish of being able to field ranged mechs armed with transphasic weapons.

Therefore, General Verle had already decided long ago that there was little point in wasting the firepower of his ranged mech units on an expert mech like the Skorpion Kommando.

Perhaps this might make Venerable Jannzi and Venerable Isobel feel abandoned by the Larkinson Army, but Verle believed that the two Larkinson expert pilots should be smart enough to understand the reasons behind his decisions.

That did not mean that General Verle neglected their plight completely. It just took a bit more time than expected to reposition the special mech units that he had tasked with reinforcing the Shield of Samar and the Promethea.

The mech officer in charge of the newly-arrived mech unit opened a communication channel to the two Larkinson expert mechs.

"Venerable Jannzi, Venerable Isobel. I apologize for our delay. We helped with taking down several enemy expert mechs and attracted a lot more retaliation from the Sundered Phalanx than we expected. We were forced to split up half of our mechs to keep our attackers at bay."

"That is not important, Major Dietrich." Venerable Jannzi immediately said as she took charge of the situation. "I need you and your fellow Battle Criers to reposition your Nullifier mechs so that you can cover for the Promethea. Do not allow the Skorpion Kommando to approach Venerable Isobel's expert mech. Its condition is so bad that it cannot endure another attack."

"Understood. We will attempt to discourage the Skorpion Kommando from taking action against the Promethea as best as possible." The Battle Crier officer replied.

They no longer needed to exchange any words as they all knew what they needed to do. While the two expert mechs were adjusting to the fact that they had backup, the special ranged mechs fielded by the Battle Criers began to spread out across a wide fan that was opposite to the Promethea.

When the ranged mechs brought their heavy luminar crystal rifles to bear on the Skorpion Kommando, their piercing slicer beams began to dig into the more vulnerable rear armor, flight system and most importantly the Skorpion Tail with remarkable efficiency!

Though an armored expert mech like the Skorpion Kommando was still able to endure the incoming attacks with no immediate alarm, Venerable Oskar

was not comfortable with exposing the most vulnerable side of his machine to sustained enemy attacks, especially when they were both accurate and more capable of damaging his expert mech's transphasic armor than normal.

A quick analysis caused the Fridayman expert pilot's heart to quake.

It turned out that the 100 or so Battle Crier mechs wielded transphasic heavy luminar crystal mechs!

The new Godkiller rifles that Ves had developed in cooperation with Melmen Advanced Systems were substantially different from the more ordinary luminar crystal rifles utilized by most Larkinson mechs.

Just as their name suggested, Ves developed these specialized guns with the aim of taking down threats like the dark gods that he had faced in the past.

His overall premise for this weapon and its accompanying mech design was simple.

"If gods do exist out there, then they can be killed! As long as we kill enough gods, then none of them will exist anymore, allowing humble humans like myself to inherit the cosmos! I just need to come up with enough firepower to overwhelm their defenses."

With that in mind, Ves invested a lot of time and ingenuity in completing his long-stalled Fearless Project.

One of the key aspects that made his Nullifier mechs so threatening were their Godkiller rifles.

They were larger, heavier and incorporated much more expensive materials than normal. Ves had to invest a lot of effort into adding strong spirituality-based security methods in order to meet the demands of the MTA and prevent these potent armaments from falling into the wrong hands.

Ves' original intention for the Godkiller rifle was to make it powerful enough to allow his Nullifier mechs to take down enemy expert mechs by themselves!

In order to ensure that his Battle Criers could truly pose a threat against enemy expert mechs, Ves had made the remarkable decision to integrate 5 grams of phasewater in each Godkiller rifle.

This was not a large amount of phasewater compared to the weapons utilized by typical transphasic expert mechs, but the modest addition was enough to weaken the transphasic effect of the Skorpion Kommando by up to 50 percent!

In other words, the Godkiller rifles already possessed the capital to wear down the Skorpion Kommando's defenses, especially if they concentrated their output on the weaker rear of the Fridayman expert mech!

The uncannily effective slicer beam salvos caused Venerable Oskar to become so uncomfortable that he consciously tried to turn the rear of his expert mech away from the Battle Crier mechs as much as possible.

Unfortunately for him, orienting his expert mech in these ways prevented it from pursuing the Promethea as effectively as before. Oskar's hopes of quickly finishing off the Promethea became dashed!

"You annoying ants! What is your identity?!" Venerable Oskar demanded on the open channel. "You are not a regular mech unit!"

"You have the honor of attracting the attention of the Nullifier Battalion." Major Dietrich responded in a neutral and utterly fearless tone. "Your reign of terror will come to an end at our hands."

"Heh, with just a hundred mechs?"

"Our mechs have already contributed to the downfall of three of your Sundered Phalanx's precious expert mechs."

"Those were low-tier expert mechs, am right?!"

"Whether your Skorpion Kommando is a low-tier or high-tier expert mech does not matter to us. As long as we can make it bleed, we can take it down. Even ants like us can defeat an elephant like you. Look at how much damage your expert mech has already sustained."

The Nullifier Battalion did indeed help with defeating a number of enemy expert mechs, but that was when they cooperated with other friendly expert mechs.

Major Dietrich did not think that the Nullifier mechs under his command were capable of defeating the Skorpion Kommando by themselves. The enemy expert mech could easily close in on the Battle Crier mechs and cut them down one by one regardless of how much they tried to distance themselves from each other.

However, the Shield of Samar and the Promethea were already doing a decent job at constraining the Skorpion Kommando.

It was impossible for this dangerous enemy machine to attack the Battle Crier mechs without exposing its rear to the Ignitron rifle of the Promethea!

As such, the Skorpion Kommando's situation continued to deteriorate as it became sandwiched between two powerful ranged threats.

On one side, the Promethea did its best to pelt the Skorpion Kommando with exploding energy beams. Each strike not only chipped away a small but significant chunk of armor, but also made it vulnerable against follow-up attacks launched by the Battle Crier mechs!

On the other side, the dispersed mechs of the Nullifier battalion completely ignored the intimidation factor of the Skorpion Kommando and fearlessly tracked its movements while targeting its more crucial sections as much as possible.

Even if the effective hit rate of a single single Nullifier mech did not exceed 30 percent, that still amounted to a dozen hits per salvo due to the numbers brought by the Battle Criers!

Though Venerable Oskar increasingly wished to smash apart the two potent ranged threats, the Shield of Samar doggedly tried to keep the Skorpion Kommando in place.

"I won't allow you to leave!" Venerable Jannzi exclaimed as her mind became more and more strained as she continually tried to lock her opponent down with the help of gravitic power.

The steady downpour of incoming shots were slowly stripping away at the Skorpion Kommando's formidable transphasic armor system.

Its front received the bulk of the damage but its rear wasn't looking all that great either, especially when a multitude of slicer beams had landed on its crucial flight system!

It became increasingly clear that the Skorpion Kommando couldn't endure this situation much longer. Let alone taking down the Promethea and the mechs of the Nullifier Battalion, Venerable Oskar wasn't even sure if he would be able to return to friendly space!

### **Chapter 4320 Sammie**

After the Skorpion Kommando became sandwiched by both the Promethea and half of the Nullifier Battalion, the expert space knight came under increasing suppression.

Though it was able to rely on its strong transphasic armor system to buy a lot of time for itself, the problem was that both the Promethea and the Nullifier mechs possessed enough firepower grind the Skorpion Kommando over time!

More crucial components such as the flight system, the various booster modules and the Skorpion Tail no longer looked as pristine as before as

numerous hits damaged their exteriors and threatened to disable them entirely!

"Ahh!"

A powerful attack from the Promethea managed to damage a part of the Skorpion Kommando's flight system, thereby directly reducing its mobility to a small extent.

As the Skorpion Kommando came under greater pressure, Venerable Oskar Virathon became more vicious than before!

His expert mech's attacks struck harder as Oskar did not hesitate to take greater risks.

The Shield of Samar that consistently prevented the Skorpion Kommando from running away got struck by many sword strikes and numerous painful Skorpion Tail attacks!

The latter especially posed a great threat to the living mech. The Shield of Samar experienced great pain that fed back to Venerable Jannzi, causing her to grow angrier to the suffering that her opponent inflicted!

"MY FRONTAL ARMOR IS FULL OF HOLES." The Shield of Samar groaned. "I CANNOT ENDURE THESE ATTACKS MUCH LONGER. TOO MUCH OF MY INTERNALS ARE EXPOSED."

"Do you want to retreat?" Venerable Jannzi asked.

The Shield of Samar conveyed a clear sense of rejection. "NO. WE ARE THE ONLY ONES THAT CAN STOP THE SKORPION KOMMANDO FROM RAMPAGING THROUGH OUR REAR LINES. IT IS NOT JUST THE PROMETHEA AND THE NULLIFIER BATTALION THAT ARE IN DANGER."

The living expert mech was right. The Golden Skull Alliance could hardly field any other expert mech that could restrain the Skorpion Kommando!



Venerable Jannzi and the Shield of Samar therefore tried to endure the onslaught as much possible, hoping to spread out the incoming venom attacks as much possible

After experiencing the Skorpion Kommando's signature attack numerous times, Jannzi had become a lot more proficient at anticipating and mitigating its damage.

While her Shield of Samar wasn't fast enough to evade the deadly Skorpion Tail attack entirely, it was enough to deflect or redirect this powerful limb to the more intact sections of the living mech.

In addition, Jannzi's close relationship with Qilanxo allowed the latter to project momentary spatial barriers that offered modest but crucial protection to the exposed internals!

"Keep holding on, Sammie! The Skorpion Kommando is already starting to decline."

Jannzi managed to preserve the performance of her expert mech for a longer time by employing various techniques, but she could not keep doing this without a price. The most immediate consequence was that the Shield of Samar's irreplaceable Unending alloy armor was steadily melting away!

Although the loss of all of this bulky alloy reduced the mass of the Shield of Samar and made it easier for it to keep up with the Skorpion Kommando, the biggest downside aside from losing a lot of protection was that it was losing a lot of spiritual capacity!

Unending alloy played a crucial role in enhancing how much spiritual energy from its design spirit it was able to contain.

Each ton of Unending alloy that dissolved from its frame turned it into a weaker prime mech.

After so much of the Shield of Samar's exterior got worn away, the help that Qilanxo was able to provide became a lot more limited.

Venerable Oskar immediately recognized these changes and began to wait for the right moment.

As soon as the Shield of Samar attempted to defend itself against another Skorpion Tail attack, the stinger suddenly expanded and released a wider spread of corrosive fluids than before!

The cone of venom spread out into space and splattered across the entire surface of the Shield of Samar!

Many shallow holes began to form in the armor that was still intact, but what was even worse was that numerous exposed internal systems received damage as well!

Even if the damage to these parts were relatively limited due to their inherent resilience and the high degree of compartmentalization of the Shield of Samar, the expert space knight unavoidably stalled for an instant!

Venerable Oskar completely exploded with the energy that he had left!

"Hah! No defense is impregnable against my expert mech. Now that I've put you in your place, let me take care of your comrades and show you that your knightly duty is an exercise in futility!"

Though the Shield of Samar was more vulnerable than ever, Venerable Oskar still understood that it would take quite a bit of time and effort to defeat the hardy mech completely.

The Promethea and the Nullifier Battalion would never stand by and allow the Skorpion Kommando to finish the job.

Considering that the ranged mechs posed the greatest threat against the Skorpion Kommando at this time, Venerable Oskar urgently wanted to get rid of them first!

He had already set his sights on the damaged Promethea. Not only was it a lot more vulnerable than before, but destroying it would immediately relieve a lot of pressure.

Of course, Venerable Isobel did not allow her Promethea to become a sitting duck. She drove her expert mech to the rear of the Larkinson Clan in an attempt to delay interception while luring the Skorpion Kommando further away from enemy lines.

Since the mobility of both the Promethea and the Skorpion Kommando became impaired, it would have taken a long time for the latter to catch up to its target.

Venerable Oskar already arranged a solution to this problem.

"Kasia!"

The Star of Liberation that had been dueling the Amaranto for a while now was no longer in a good condition. However, Venerable Kasia Rezkin still managed to squeeze out a quick snapshot at the distant Promethea before she went back to restraining her main opponent!

The overlapping resonance-empowered laser and positron beam that quickly roared across the battlefield was not the strongest possible attack of the Star of Liberation.

Its power just happened to be enough to precisely strike the exposed rear of the Promethea!

Though Venerable Isobel's intuition detected the threat in advance, she was still too weak and her expert mech was no longer in a fit enough state to evade the attack entirely.

Two powerful energy blasts erupted from the rear of the Promethea in quick succession!

While the firepower outputted by the ranged high-tier expert rifleman mech did not succeed in destroying the Promethea outright, the latter's flight system was no longer operational as more than half of its components were destroyed.

"What is your status, Isobel?!" Jannzi urgently asked.

"My Promethea has lost the ability to move." The strained expert pilot reported. "Aside from a few boosters, my expert mech can't move anymore. My machine is drifting space and I can't do anything else aside from turning my mech around so that I can minimize its silhouette."

"Damn! The Skorpion Kommando is rapidly gaining on your Promethea and my Shield of Samar can't catch up. I highly advise you to eject."

"...I can't!"

"Please repeat that, Isobel."

"I can't eject!" The ranged specialist spoke. "The strike to my rear is worse than I thought. Too much of the ejection mechanism has malfunctioned to the point where the backup systems aren't even working anymore. I'm stuck!"

"What?!"

The news rocked Venerable Jannzi's mind.

With the way that Venerable Oskar was racing towards the crippled Promethea with his damaged Skorpion Kommando, Venerable Isobel would most certainly lose her life in a short moment.

This was something that Venerable Jannzi could never accept!

"We need to go faster!" Jannzi urged her battle partner.

Though the Shield of Samar was still able to rely on its Skidrock Drive to shakily engage warp travel and catch up to the Skorpion Kommando, the enemy expert mech already gained too much of a head start!

Venerable Jannzi rapidly processed the movement data and concluded that it was impossible for her Shield of Samar to catch up before the Skorpion Kommando could land a fatal blow on the helpless Promethea!

Her mind and will become more active than ever as she rapidly tried to figure out ways to prevent her fellow expert pilot from dying.

Nothing seemed to work. Even if she employed extreme measures, it still wouldn't be enough for her expert mech to intervene!

It was at this time that the Shield of Samar conveyed a short message.

"I CAN SAVE VENERABLE ISOBEL."

"How, Sammie?"

"SURRENDER TOTAL CONTROL TO ME." The Shield of Samar stated.

"Granted."

The expert pilot harbored total trust in her battle partner.

"IF YOU DO THIS, I WILL PUT OUR LIVES IN GREAT DANGER. I CANNOT GUARANTEE OUR SURVIVAL."

Venerable Jannzi briefly ran back the words she exchanged with Venerable Oskar.

In a situation where she was in the position to save her comrades at the cost of putting herself at risk, would she choose to do her duty and abide by the tenets of a knight?

She instantly made up her mind. "I am not Venerable Oskar! I am a protector! I will never abandon my duty!"

Her willpower surged with strength as she affirmed her conviction!

"THEN LET GO."

She did.

Pain instantly overtook her mind and body as a powerful presence forcibly wrenched away her control while also squeezing up her strength as if she was a battery!

Though Venerable Jannzi instinctively wanted to resist against this painful intrusion, she consciously suppressed her instincts because she fully trusted her expert mech to do what was necessary!

The Shield of Samar did not betray her trust. The powerful living mech took over control in order to start a number of different processes.

Its flight system exploded with a lot more power than before.

It overloaded its Skiprock Drive, causing it to amplify the Shield of Samar's speed even more at the cost of burning a lot of phasewater and damaging the combat drive's internals.

It also activated the Fatal Attraction resonating ability to a much stronger degree than before!

While the Skorpion Kommando was too far away for the Larkinson expert mech to catch up to, the Shield of Samar actually applied a strong gravitational pull towards itself!

It was as if Jannzi's expert mech was pushing itself behind its back!

Even though this kind of move should never work, the Shield of Samar's incredibly strong determination seemed to defy the laws of nature and succeeded in accelerating its frame forward a lot faster than normal!

Though all of these emergency efforts put the Shield of Samar under so much stress that it was already starting to malfunction, the larger and slower expert space knight rapidly managed to close the distance to the Skorpion Kommando!

The Shield of Samar didn't even have to do anything special. As long as it managed to collide against its target, the Skorpion Kommando would definitely miss its opportunity to finish off the Promethea!

As the distance between the two space knights rapidly closed, Venerable Oskar grew incredibly angry at Jannzi and her living mech!

"Fine, then! If you want to sacrifice yourself to save a weaker expert pilot, then so be it! You brought this on yourself!"

Venerable Jannzi sensed an incredibly strong threat from their adversary as the Skorpion Kommando rapidly thrust out its Skorpion Tail towards the approaching Shield of Samar!

The Skorpion Tail began to glow with incredible power as its stinger actually expanded, revealing a wide nozzle that was already filled with a lot of venom.

It turned out that Venerable Oskar already realized that his deployment in the field had come to an end. Before he pulled his Skorpion Kommando back to friendly territory, he wanted to empty all of the remaining corrosive fluids stored inside his expert mech at once!

This supervenom attack was so threatening that Venerable Jannzi gained the sense that she would undoubtedly die if her Shield of Samar continued to advance!

Nonetheless, Venerable Jannzi exhibited no fear at all during this desperate time. She continued to endure the pain and lend as much of her willpower to her expert mech as possible to ensure that they would succeed in saving Venerable Isobel and the Promethea.

As long as the Skorpion Kommando discharged all of its venom at once, it no longer posed a massive threat against other Larkinsons anymore!

At this moment of life and death, Venerable Jannzi felt more in tune with her principles, her conviction and her knightly virtues than before.

A small sublimation took place in her mind as her willpower continued to expand, thereby supplying her Shield of Samar with greater power.

However, just before her expert mech reached the Skorpion Kommando, Jannzi's eyes abruptly widened as her connection to her battle partner started to snap.

"No! We're in this together, Sammie! We promised to be partners for life!"

A powerful sense of fatalism overtook the expert mech.

"ONLY ONE SACRIFICE IS NEEDED."

The Shield of Samar forcibly activated the eject by itself, which rapidly caused its cockpit to launch from the rear of the doomed expert mech!

"NOOOOO! YOU CAN'T DO THIS, SAMMIE!" Venerable Jannzi hysterically called as her cockpit rapidly entered a trajectory that brought it towards the nearest friendly starship.

"LIVE FOR ME, JANNZI."

Though the Shield of Samar had lost its true resonance and prime resonance support, it still retained more than enough momentum to collide against the Skorpion Kommando.



The latter tried to prevent this as much as possible by prematurely spraying out its entire reserves of venom into space!

A large volume of phasewater-rich corrosive fluids based on several different formulas rapidly covered and engulfed the Shield of Samar!

Even though the Skorpion Kommando already used up more than half of its reserves, what it had left just a moment ago was more than enough to eat away at the remnants of the Shield of Samar Unending alloy armor system and dissolve enormous chunks of its internals!

The power reactor, the mech engine, the heat sinks, the energy cells and even the arms and legs fell apart or melted away!

Though the dying Larkinson expert mech still managed to collide against the Skorpion Kommando and inflict serious damage to its flight system while it was melting, its fate was most definitely worse!

By the time the Skorpion Kommando's venom had run its course, the Shield of Samar was no longer whole.

The mech wasn't even recognizable anymore as much of its frame had broken up into numerous streams of highly-deformed metal slag.

Only a few whole parts were left intact. Fingers, internal motors, a piece of the power reactor and more were all that was left of one of the most iconic mechs designed by Ves.

The only remnant of the Shield of Samar that was still whole was its head.

Aside from getting splattered by numerous drops of corrosive fluids, its iconic visage still remained intact, though it was completely devoid of power.

"Sammie..."

Venerable Jannzi felt completely defeated as she lifelessly sat inside her ejected cockpit.

Even though her expert mech had saved her life, Jannzi never wanted to be brought to safety!