

The Mech Touch

Chapter 7532 Collective Effort Problem

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Lack of spending power severely limited their options.

Since they had a dire need of Ascension Points to realize their future plans, they did not waste too much time on window shopping.

They sped up their tour through the Divine Bazaar and the Tree of Possibilities.

Though they managed to identify many attractive goodies, none of them fell within their meager budgets.

Ves in particular stood directly below a particularly compelling fruit.

It dangled above his head like a fishing lure, casually swaying in the gentle wind.

Unfortunately for him, no matter how hard he pulled on the fruit, it could never be plucked under the current circumstances.

The fact that it had reappeared this time seemed like a deliberate taunt from the Mech Designer System.

[Divine Blacksmith Records]

Price: 975 Ascension Points

Imparts a large collection of related smithing recipes and techniques developed by a Divine Blacksmith. The majority of techniques consist of special hammering methods that can impart metallic and organic materials with special properties. The smithing recipes contain many combinations that enable a craftsman to forge powerful materials with the infusion of special energies and materials into a work.

Gloriana approached from behind. She gazed up at the same fruit that Ves obsessed over and let out a contemptuous noise.

"With your spending habits, the probability that you can hold yourself back until you have gathered almost a thousand AP is close to zero. You cannot help yourself Ves. The Tree of Possibilities offers many more cost-effective enlightenment fruits. I even suspect that this is a very subtle test. The only way you can obtain the greatest reward is to withstand temptation that is nearly impossible to

resist. Your willpower must become as strong as that of an expert pilot in order to save up so much AP for so many years. Given your persistent lack of patience and emphasis on speeding up your progress, I can never see you commit to such a course."

Ves grimaced. His wife may be harsh, but she read him like a book. He truly could not see himself doing this either.

"I am glad that I am not the only one who suspects the Mech Designer System is constantly testing us on multiple different levels. I have no doubt about its fairness. If this fruit costs 975 Ascension Points, then it is definitely worth it. I have a feeling that as long as I absorb this complete heritage, many of my current problems will no longer stump me any longer. If I did not spend so much AP on goods, enlightenment fruits and facility upgrades, I would have just been able to scrape enough income to redeem this grand prize."

"I disagree." Gloriana shook her head. "You would never have been able to make it this far if you chose to hold back for so many years. Those small expenditures provided you with important advantages that often came at the right time. You expanded your design solutions, empowered our champions and helped our forces claim victory over enemies that we shouldn't have been able to defeat. I am convinced that you would have never been able to become a friend to so many tier 1 galactic citizens and become a tier 2 galactic citizen yourself if you did not manage to stand out with the help of the System rewards that you have redeemed so far. You managed to come so far in just a single generation. Your AP spending is never a problem as long as you make the most of the opportunities that have opened up. I can hardly fault your decision-making on this front."

His wife rarely praised Ves so wholeheartedly. This meant that each time she did so, she truly meant it from the bottom of her heart.

She truly believed that if anyone else had been in his place, it would have been much less probable for them to be able to gain so much success and climb to such a high position in human society in such a short amount of time!

Her words encouraged him and revived his confidence. Though he still longed to pluck the Divine Blacksmith Records, his obsession had faded.

Ves had already made his choices. He had chosen to nibble on many different fruits as opposed to saving up for a big one. There was no point in regretting his past decisions. It was much better for him to look forward.

"Thank you, Gloriana. Let's get back on track."

The four mech designers gathered together again underneath the expansive canopy of the Tree of Possibilities.

Hundreds of colorful fruits glinted in the light that came from above.

Sadly, none of the individuals present had any intention of enjoying the picturesque setting.

"So did you guys manage to find anything that can directly counter the deathborn?" Ves asked the three women.

They all shook their heads.

"I have found a few fruits that can indirectly strengthen your resistance against mental intrusions." Ketis said. "They only apply to warriors and swordsmasters such as myself. The benefits cannot be transferred into your works."

Alexa pointed at a few colorful fruits. "I found over a dozen fruits that can improve our living mechs in various different ways. However, all but two of them cost hundreds of AP. As for the cheaper ones, it will take a large amount of time or resources that we do not have in our possession in order to realize their full worth."

Gloriana crossed her arms. "I have found two enlightenment fruits that can strengthen or expand our ability to process superdimensional matter. Both of them cost at least a hundred AP each, but we can use the acquired knowledge to immediately strengthen our existing stock of superdimensional mechs and arms. This is knowledge that can leapfrog our understanding of superdimensional technology by several years. It will take at least that much time for the well-funded research institutions of other major human powers to make comparable progress."

That sounded strong at first, but Ves quickly recognized the downside of this potential route.

The Larkinson Clan already made a deal with the Red Association and other big players to share relatively common advancements in superdimensionality technology.

As long as Ves and the Larkinsons remained patient enough, they would gradually obtain the fruits of other people's efforts over time without needing to spend any AP or other scarce resources!

If Ves or the other users of the Mech Designer System redeemed these fruits and subsequently applied their newly gained knowledge, they might enjoy an advantage, but it would not last that long.

Given how easy it was for the major players to spy on others, it would take half a year at most for the Red Three and the first-rate colonial superstates to copy the new technologies that the Larkinsons had spent hundreds of AP to redeem!

Ves did not like the sound of that.

He did not harbor a strong hatred against freeloaders, but he never felt pleased that others took advantage of his hard work!

"Okay." Ves said as he shifted his focus on his immediate priority. "It sounds to me that the System isn't offering us any obvious silver bullets this time. That is fine. There is enough knowledge available here that we should be able to leverage at least some of it to our advantage. We just have to be more creative about it. We need more time to mull over the possibilities and figure out our new synergies. In the meantime, I suggest we proceed with holding a marathon. Regardless of our subsequent plans, we cannot do without a heap of AP in our accounts."

Several other mech designers nodded. This was a rational and sensible course of action.

Gloriana suddenly frowned. "Wait. The conditions for a marathon are not as good as before."

"Explain, please."

"There used to be two of us. Now there are four." She pointed out. "Do you know what this means? The Mission Hall only offers around a dozen Missions at a time, and each of them can only be accepted by a single 'user'. Each of us has periodically stopped by and accepted the easiest or fastest Missions on offer. What is left are troublesome tasks that may promise greater rewards, but also demand much greater time and effort. I am talking about Missions where you need to gather a hundred different metals with very rare properties, or ones that demand that you design 20 unique mechs that match a demanding list of requirements. Completing just one of them is a chore. Completing several of them in a row will absolutely drain your sanity."

"Not that he has much to begin with." Ketis muttered under her breath.

"There is another related matter." Gloriana continued as if she hadn't heard the swordmaster.

"There are four of us. If we split up the work and accept our own separate Missions, we will all split up our respective AP earnings as a consequence. Perhaps we will all become 50 AP richer, but that will not help us if we want to redeem a single enlightenment fruit worth 300 AP. The System does not offer any options to transfer our points or pool them together to conduct a joint purchase."

She was correct. The Mech Designer System deliberately did not offer these transfer functions because it would have been too easy for its users to become freeloaders!

"Does this mean that only one of us should complete all of the Missions?" Alexa asked.

"Yes." Gloriana firmly responded. "Ves, you are the most versatile mech designer among us. You have the greatest chance of completing the most Missions within a reasonable timeframe. It will be up to you to bear the greatest burden."

Ves immediately frowned. He did not look forward to spending so many weeks and months on these difficult and monotonous tasks!

He had to find a way to drag the others in as well.

He quickly realized a potential solution.

"Wait. Just because I have to complete all of those Missions does not mean that you can stand around doing nothing or exit this space early. What if... you can assist me in my work? As far as I know, the System does not prohibit this kind of help."