

The Mech Touch

Chapter 7533 The Power of Four

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They found a loophole.

At least they thought they found one.

When they studied the framework of the rules inside the Mission Hall, the four mech designers found a clever means to circumvent the restriction that multiple individuals could not concentrate their Ascension Points.

"The rules do not expressly forbid according to my interpretation." Gloriana spoke in a precise tone of voice. "It did not seem obvious at first, but now that we have drawn our attention to this dynamic, it looks far too much like a deliberate loophole than anything else. Perhaps this is the System's attempt at a teaching moment."

Ves nodded in agreement. He held the same idea. His repeated interactions with the Mech Designer System had long convinced him of the idea that it was anything but a rigid and inflexible tool. It possessed a strong degree of cunning and intelligence. What may seem coincidental to ordinary people was definitely deliberate in some way!

"Given that the rules do not expressly forbid it, I think it is worth a try." He evaluated. "I will accept the Missions and perform most of the core tasks required to complete them. The rest of you will have to stay by my side and perform contributing and assisting tasks. As long as you guys don't do all of the work, I am sure the Mission Hall will credit me for all of the work that has been done."

"We will have to establish a very deliberate balance between contributions and assistance." Ves emphasized while he mused about the System's tolerance. "The main ideas have to come from me. I should at least construct the framework of a solution. The rest of you should try to avoid giving me too many ideas. It is best if you stick to following my direction and do much of the grunt work that does not require a lot of imagination. You should try to emulate our smart AI's as much as possible in this regard. As long as we stick to this approach, I doubt the System will give us grief."

"Are you certain about that, sir?" Alexa asked with a skeptical expression. "I do not believe the System will let you exploit its rules too much. You once said that the Mission Hall rewards overcompletion of Missions if you have gone above and beyond what is asked. Is there a possibility that it can do the reverse? If you offload too much work to third parties, would that not diminish your rewards on a proportional basis?"

"..."

That sounded way too logical.

Gloriana did not look too concerned, though. "Let us find out for ourselves. We should start with the shortest and least rewarding Mission that is still available. We will work according to the plan we have set. Once we have finished it, the System's feedback will tell us how much it will tolerate our clever thinking. If the plan turns out to be unviable, then we have only lost a modest amount of opportunity costs at most."

The others agreed with this course. All of their discussion so far consisted of ungrounded speculation. The best way to proceed was to put their assumptions to the test. Only real empirical data could guide them forward.

Ves accepted a tedious Mission that everyone else had avoided so far because it called for him to design over a dozen mechs.

Fortunately, they did not have to be completely original. He only needed to design a single base model and derive lots of different variants.

The reason why this Mission had remained open to this date was because none of the mech designers looked forward to investing so much time on doing fairly monotonous work.

However, that just happened to make it ideal for their experimental approach!

The workload was excessive when handled by a single mech designer, but it was different if 4 of them pooled their manpower together.

Two of them were Senior Mech Designers, both of which possessed complementing strengths.

Ves not only possessed a broad knowledge base and a highly creative mind, but also possessed a unique comprehension of hyper technology and E-technology.

His companion spirit Blinky also served him well in his work sessions. He could produce any E energy attribute on command, but also possessed a vast amount of relatively primitive E-processor banks.

Although their sophistication was low due to their lack of development, their quantity was so vast that they covered a significant proportion of the central planet's surface!

All of those spiritual processors working together could act as a barely adequate substitute for a modern supercomputer.

These were ideal for processing huge amounts of relatively simple and straightforward calculations. Ves did not have to borrow the manpower of other mech designers for this purpose. Relying on these advantages, Ves already possessed the confidence that he could complete this particular Mission by himself. It just would have taken a lot of time.

This was why he welcomed Gloriana's help. The two had worked together for many years now, so their collaboration had reached a very high degree of efficiency.

The familiarity and mutual respect that they had built over almost two decades of designing the same machines had not eliminated all of their disagreements, but made it so that they reduced the impact of any friction to the lowest possible extent.

Complete agreement was neither possible nor desirable. Both of them knew that if one of them fully agreed with the other, their collaboration would have lost much of their value.

The entire reason why they were called the 'Miracle Couple' was because of the sparks they generated whenever their strong ideas collided with each other!

Unfortunately, in the interest of staying within the framework of the System's rules, Gloriana had to work hard to restrain herself from expressing much of her personal ideas.

No matter how many times she collaborated with her husband, she possessed her own distinct ideas on how mechs should be designed.

She still did not favor his rather chaotic and impulsive approach. She especially hated it whenever he abruptly 'gained inspiration' and went down the rabbit hole with no definite idea where it would end!

Nonetheless, she had endured this kind of habit for so long that she was able to rein in her temper and keep her mouth firmly shut.

Gloriana may not like it, but this was hardly the first time she had limited herself to providing pure assistance to her husband.

She just treated him as if he was a child with zero attention span and a huge amount of energy. It was best to let him run around for a while until he grew tired again.

As they all worked together, Gloriana found herself taking charge of the other two mech designers. She understood Ves' temper and habits the best. Despite his long-time leadership responsibilities, he did not actually spend much time on managing his subordinates.

When it came to the Design Department, Gloriana had long taken over those duties, so she simply returned to familiar territory when it came to coordinating the work within their little design team.

What helped her a lot in this regard was her cranial implant set. It was by far the most advanced due to the rare and coveted Mentalist Crystal fragments embedded into them. This extraordinary hyper material not only augmented all of her data processing capabilities to a significant degree, but also brought qualitative changes, much of which was difficult to describe.

Though the cranial implant set could not match the raw processing power available inside the Blinkyverse, the effects brought by the Mentalist Crystal fragments vastly increased their efficiency!

This made Gloriana the best at solving very difficult technical problems that required convoluted or many sequential steps to solve!

In fact, she was so effective at this particular job that Ves had to refrain from off-loading too many problems to his wife.

If she ended up doing all of the critical work, then he would have far too little credit left!

Compared to the two Senior Mech Designers, the two Journeymen made much more modest contributions.

This was not only due to the difference in rank, but also other capabilities.

Ketis possessed a much more narrow and specialized knowledge base. She knew all about extraordinary sword techniques and designing swordsman mechs, but she could contribute much less to the development of other mech archetypes.

Gloriana simply assigned tasks related to melee mechs to the swordmaster for that reason.

Even if not all melee mechs wielded a sword, Ketis could still apply much of her expertise to these cases, just not as extensively as before.

As for ranged mechs, forget it. Gloriana knew better than to let a brute like Ketis bash her skull against an elegant ranged mech design.

Alexa Streon conveniently took over this responsibility. Her elite Terran background and upbringing turned her into a genuine first-class mech designer. Even if she was just a Journeyman, that did not diminish her vast amount of knowledge and familiarity with a large variety of ranged weapon systems!

From plasma weapons to gravitic weapons, Alexa could easily design or adapt dozens of high-tech weaponry from scratch. Even if none of these weapon designs could match the performance of works developed by their more specialized colleagues, it didn't matter too much as long as they weren't too shabby!

After they quickly figured out each other's competences and roles, the four mech designers began to get serious and spent several continuous days inside the System Space.

Naturally, they had to pay rent at the Workshop of Creation in order to extend their stay. The already limited amount of AP in his hands dwindled with every passing day.

If the work took too long for them to complete, then it would be questionable whether they would earn any profit for completing this Mission!

They all understood this reality, so none of them dared to spend too much time on rest or leisure. Their socialization had dropped to the minimum in order to squeeze out additional minutes of work per day.

They proceeded like this for one-and-a-half weeks.

On the final day, Ves and Gloriana both came to the decision that they had met the conditions for completing the Mission.

Though they may be able to earn bonus points for improving their current designs, they did not think the tradeoff was worthwhile!

"Let us not take the risk." Gloriana said. "We are already pushing certain boundaries. We should not expect too much generosity from the System."

"Very well."