

The Mech 4781

Chapter 4781 Related Tech

"So how does one repair an ancient alien crystal control interface?" Helena asked as she plucked her and casually turned it into its Pistol Mode and back again. "Because from my eyes, you are faced with drastically different technology than the circuitry and other conventional technology that you are accustomed to working with. This isn't one of your mechs, Ves. This is true Red Ocean alien technology that has never intersected with the tech that humanity has developed."

Ves did not immediately respond. Instead, he already entered into his work mode and focused on collecting lots of data. He utilized all of the sensors built into his Unending Regalia to thoroughly scan and map out the broken crystalline interface.

In addition to that, he held his Vulcaneye multiscanner and proceeded to examine the different crystals one by one in order to figure out whether he could mend the broken crystals.

"Hello, Ves? Don't ignore your sister! It's rude!"

"Oh, sorry, Helena. I often get distracted whenever I am engaged in my work. I operate best when I can devote my full concentration to a task. Anyway, I did not miss your last question. The short answer is that while you are right that I am most proficient in working with conventional human technology, don't count me out right away. I have worked with my fair share of alien technology, most prominently luminar crystal technology. The Gray Lotus that is tied to your flower is one of them, remember?"

"Not all crystals are the same, Ves. As far as I am aware of, the luminar race whose technology you have scavenged from are native to the Milky Way. They developed their tech under vastly different circumstances."

"That is true... up to a point." Ves said with a smile.

"What do you mean by that?"

Ves reached down and picked up a broken purple crystal. "Look closely at this. Do you see the squiggles and patterns that are etched inside? These bear a remarkable resemblance to the circuitry of luminar crystals. In fact, even if the crystal circuitry patterns are different, I can clearly see that they share at least some of the same paradigms and frameworks!

Helena slowly widened her eyes. "Are you suggesting that this native Red Ocean crystal tech has a family relation with luminar crystal technology?"

"I am not suggesting it. I am merely stating the truth. Look at this, dearest sister."

He projected one of his luminar crystal designs from his combat armor. The projected crystal was situated right next to the ancient purple crystal.

The similarities became more obvious at this point. As Helena leaned closer, she could vaguely recognize a few patterns that looked awfully similar.

In fact, the likelihood that two completely different civilizations located in two completely different galaxies would develop their crystal circuitry tech in such a similar fashion was quite low!

"Wait, isn't a lot of technology similar due to universal laws?" The design spirit questioned as she adopted a skeptical tone. "After all, for many civilizations, their uses of electricity, circuitry, starship thrusters and so on are all highly related to each other because there aren't many other ways to perform the same actions in a more effective way."

"I know what you are talking about, but this is different. Crystals like these can be empowered and configured in many different ways. It is like building a city. We like to build lots of fixed structures on the ground and if possible build a host of floating structures in the air and pair that up with a highly defensive underground tunnel complex in case of war. The nunsers on the other hand stick to building large metal towers that also function as starships. This allows these aliens to adopt a more nomadic lifestyle where their homes and warships are always with them and can always move wherever they like. Do you see how much they diverge?"

Personally, Ves thought that the nunsers adopted an excellent model for their fleets. By turning their homes into massive starships, they could get the best of both worlds!

"I know that many aliens in this dwarf galaxy have odd notions on how they should build their cities."

"Now consider the puelmers." Ves continued. "These funny-looking aliens are so adept with technology that they can build any kind of city. Do you know how their society has evolved in this matter? They decided to build smaller oval-shaped warships that can all land on the surface of a planet and act as their homes while they are on the ground. Does that sound familiar?"

"Both the nunsers and the puelmers are natives of the Red Ocean. It makes sense for them to adopt similar attitudes towards homes and star-faring vessels. It also makes sense that humans and many other aliens that are rooted in the Milky Way maintain a stricter separation between starships and land-based structures."

Ves smirked and waved the purple crystal in his armored hand. "Now imagine a circumstance where you have stumbled upon traces of an alien race in the Milky Way that just happens to adopt Red Ocean-style homeships. Would you say it is a coincidence or do you think it is likelier that the alien race has ties to a different galaxy?"

This caused the Daughter of Death to frown. Even if she was a self-proclaimed goddess, this scenario was truly stretching her thinking ability!

"Your conclusion is reaching towards the improbable. If you apply Occam's razor, you will find that the simplest answer is that the luminar race coincidentally developed its crystals in the same rough direction as the creators of this ruined crystal interface."

Ves shook his head. "That is the most straightforward answer, but that is only in a circumstance when you don't have any corroborating evidence. I happen to have additional information. A long time ago, Lucky and I visited an ancient ruin of a race that I called the crystal builders at the time. Aside from stumbling upon interesting crystals that seemed to make inventive use of crystals to produce light beams that possess highly interesting and destructive properties, the luminars also showed they had become proficient in developing long-ranged teleportation portals and causing objects to phase through other solid matter. In fact, Lucky inherited his phasing ability from messing around in an ancient luminar base!"

That was a long time ago. Ves could still remember the adventure somewhat vividly. He also created his first forbidden product in the form of a gamma laser weapon during the same period. Creating it had caused him to become a lot less restrained towards existing rules and conventions.

In hindsight, Ves could clearly see how the System shaped his personality to a degree. It ushered him in a direction that ultimately caused him to become reluctant to develop a close and intimate relationship with the Mech Trade Association.

It was for his own good. The mechers would literally kill to obtain the Mech Designer System. If it hadn't conveniently gone dormant and entered a lengthy upgrade cycle, Ves would have probably been found out by the Polymath herself!

Anyway, the System had played a rather heavy role in manipulating his younger and much more ignorant self, because how could he not grasp all of the powerful rewards it tossed in his direction?

He wondered whether the System also played a hand in steering him into discovering luminar crystal technology.

How could it be so coincidental that Ves just happened to hole up in a specific star system at a specific asteroid belt and just happened to have parked close to an entrance to a ruined luminar crystal settlement?

In fact, the most ridiculous part about it all was that the reason why he was able to encounter it was because Lucky became bored and started to mess around in the surrounding asteroids!

This was not the first time that Ves suspected that Lucky acted as an agent of the System.

Still, the gem cat was such a lazy idiot that Ves immediately dismissed the possibility. Lucky was probably the worst agent imaginable!

"Okay then, Ves." Helena placed her hands on her hips. "So you think the luminar race that lived in the Milky Way has a technological relation with the Red Ocean. I can even buy the theory that the ancestors of the luminars may have originated from our current galaxy. How does that help you repair these crystals? I am not an engineer, but I can still observe that the circuitry and other technical elements of the two crystals are still different from each other. They may share the same root, but that doesn't necessarily make them compatible."

"You are correct... technically."

"Technically?" His intangible sister raised her eyebrow.

"Luminar crystal tech and whatever crystal tech this alien control interface is based upon are most definitely of two different alien civilizations, but... they share enough of a relation to each other that I think I can exploit it to my advantage. The only question now is whether I should repair the original prison control interface to its closest original form, or try to use the resources and tools available to me to kludge my own interface together."

His sister couldn't help him in this matter, but he happened to know a design spirit who knew a thing or two about crystals!

"Illustrious One, it's time to shine!"

As Ves called upon the alien design spirit, he spontaneously came up with an interesting new idea.

Instead of trying to 'load' the Illustrious One inside his own mind, he shifted the design spirit to David's primordial skull instead!

Strangely enough, the attempt succeeded!

Even though the Illustrious One had clearly been caught off guard, the design spirit based on the luminar race adapted quickly and somehow managed to settle inside the skull with virtually no problems!

"That isn't supposed to happen!" Helena gasped!

"Well, it is happening anyway regardless of what you think."

Even Ves looked surprised that his latest solution actually worked. Although Ves still needed to concentrate his mind and endure a bit of strain to maintain the Illustrious One's presence, the difference in effort was significant!

If Ves previously served as a small and rather inadequate container to the various design spirits, he now functioned as a pipeline that directed the spirits in question to their new and much more adequate skull-shaped container!

"How did you come up with this idea, Ves?"

"Well, you gushed earlier about how the skull has been cleansed due to everything else dying out over time, and how our mother would perfectly be able to inhabit it again. If this applies to her, it can theoretically apply to other entities. Besides, this skull clearly used to hold a powerful primordial human in the past. It may have hollowed out since then, but its capacity remains unchanged."

David's skull previously shone in different colors due to all of the mixed energies he stuffed inside of it. Right now, the Illustrious One's descent had caused the lightshow to become practically radiant!

Not only was it shining a lot brighter than before, but it also radiated all of the colors of the rainbow in a mysteriously hypnotizing pattern!

The Illustrious One had descended, and the alien entity's spiritual energy that Ves previously deposited in the skull now served as an adequate anchor for his presence!

"Alright, you can explore the limits of this skull later. We still have a job to do. Let's get to work and decipher these alien crystals."

As Ves held the rainbow skull in one armored hand and a purple broken crystal in the other hand, he looked as if he was performing an occult ritual rather than engaging in a systematic scientific examination!

It took a lot shorter than Helena thought for Ves and his latest spiritual partner to draw a conclusion.

"Okay." He said as he stopped examining the crystal. "I think I have a good idea on what is broken and what I need to do to access at least a part of the controls. I don't have the time to properly recreate this broken crystal interface, so I need to rush it and try to patch as much stuff together as I can. I will probably need to create at least one authentic luminar crystal, however. This will be my key control crystal which I will use to access all of the other control systems that I have hopefully restored with my repair effort."

Although the plan was anything but perfect, Ves was confident that he could complete this job in the least amount of time!

He did not wait for Helena's input and immediately went to work. The minifab backpack module could finally play a useful role this time!

Chapter 4782 Crystal Interface

Ves became incredibly engrossed in his latest project.

Despite the dire circumstances surrounding him and his fellow clansmen, he had always believed in his heart that he could resolve every problem by engineering the right solution at the right time.

Shooting his way out of problems was not the most ideal way to overcome an obstacle. Rather than heading to the upper levels and risk falling into a trap or a fortified position prepared by the abductors of so many important stakeholders of Davute, he much preferred to use his own advantages to take control of the environment and turn the tables against his current opponents!

He worked with haste as he employed the limited but fairly powerful capabilities of the compact minifab module that he had mounted on his back.

Despite the relative bulk of this highly sophisticated and relatively fragile field production and repair equipment suite, Ves rarely kept it separated from his Unending Regalia, even in a packed form.

He had designed and fabricated several other useful backpack modules over the years. From a powerful flight system that could allow him to soar in the skies like a bird to a large high-capacity battery that was solely designed to power an incredibly powerful shoulder-mounted luminar crystal cannon, he created all kinds of options that could be handy in different situations.

He never really used them, though. Ves mostly appreciated the ability to fabricate or repair anything in a given location as long as it held enough materials for him to engineer a viable solution.

Though he spent a notable amount of years in Davute in total peace and comfort, he had never really let down his guard. Not truly, at least.

His honor guard always made sure to keep his Unending Regalia close at hand, and it always came with the minifab module as the default attachment.

Ves wanted to have the power to create by his side at all times. He wanted to make sure that if he ever got stranded on a nameless planet, he would have the essential tools to build the tools to build the tools and production equipment that could be used to fabricate a shuttle that could get him back to civilized space one way or another.

In any case, even though he hadn't actually made any use of his minifab module over the years, he showed little hesitation or lack of fluency in his operations.

Of course, his minifab's many tools were mainly geared towards working with conventional technology. They did not provide him with the equipment needed to work with crystals.

He was unable to conduct many operations he needed to repair the alien crystal interface properly.

He also lacked the knowledge and expertise to restore the alien systems to a semblance of their former selves.

Fortunately, the crystals themselves hadn't decayed that much despite the lengthy passage of time. Ves knew that the biggest advantage to crystal-based electronic systems was that they were exceptionally hard and resistant to shocks and other damage. They were so solid that laying dormant for over 100,000 years hardly caused them to deteriorate, especially when they were built to last!

Of course, even crystal-based electronics could not escape the ravages of time. It depended on the complexity and other factors. Since the control interface consisted of relatively simple clusters of processing and control-based crystals, the deterioration was not as great as with the energy shield generators a few floors down below.

The fact that the latter remained operational all of this time was also a testament to the advantages of crystal-based electronics.

Not everything was great, though. Crystals were a bit more troublesome to produce and even harder to repair. It was hard to implement proper functioning automatic repair systems into them because they were so solid and rigid.

Right now, Ves had to mend many crystals that had been smashed by a hammer or another blunt object.

Whoever wrecked this a long time ago did not do the courtesy of creating clean breaks.

Instead, numerous crystals got chipped or smashed into dozens of ugly shards.

Ves quickly had to examine and judge whether these crystals were worth saving. He dismissed over half of the crystals this way.

"The amount of available crystals is not that great to begin with." Helena noted. "Is it truly alright to dismiss so many of them? What if you do not have enough to access the control system?"

"It is alright, sister. I do not need to restore the whole control system. This place was originally built to control much if not all of the possible operations that take place in the prison facility. We don't need to gain that much control. From the clues that we have gathered, the Illustrious One and I suspect that this interface is built with modularity and compartmentalization in mind. Every crystal is a self-contained control mechanism that is tied to a specific prison system."

"That... is an odd approach to design computer systems." Helena remarked.

"Aliens always come up with new and inventive ways to tackle different technological problems.

"He leaned over and pointed to the empty hexagonal sockets that happened to resemble the honeycombs of beehives. "Look at how these sockets are designed, for example. Anyone can easily pull in and pull out as many crystals as they want. Do you know the implications of this? Not all, but many of these crystals simultaneously serve as access keys. They are all designed to be slotted in and out with ease. I can imagine that the prison warden and senior security officers carry the most important crystals on their person while the lower-ranking guards can only control less important systems."

Helena looked impressed. It seemed that calling down the Illustrious One and having him 'possess' David's skull to the point where it was lighting up like a rainbow did serve a materially useful purpose.

Though she felt a little concerned about how the possession would cause the primordial human skull to become 'imprinted' to a new owner, it should be easy enough to wipe it away as long as a design spirit did not permanently inhabit its cozy interior.

As Ves continued his efforts to repair the crystals with the limited tools he had at his disposal, he steadily mended one crystal after another.

The collection of hastily-repaired crystals consisted of different colors, with red, orange and yellow being the most predominant ones while the blue and purple crystals were noticeably scarce.

"If the aliens who created these control systems based their color choices on the spectrum of light, then the red and orange crystals should control the more basic systems of the prison facility." Ves explained to Helena. "The purple ones on the other hand should provide us with top access, though I cannot rule out the possibility of clear crystals or black crystals playing this important role."

Helena nodded in understanding. "The color spectrum of light is a universal phenomenon, so that makes it easier to convey their meaning to many different alien races. It does not appear that the high-level crystals are salvageable, though. You have only worked to mend a single purple crystal up to this point."

"You are right." Ves sighed even as he continued to merge several pieces of a green crystal back together. "The purple ones are not that numerous to begin with, and whoever went to town on them really did not want others to ever gain access to the functions that they controlled."

In the end, Ves quickly fixed up a lot of red and orange crystals. He was fortunate that there were still enough of them that were simple to repair. Although his repair methods were anything but perfect and would most definitely cause the crystals to glitch or perform suboptimally, it would be worthwhile as long as they contributed to the overall restoration of the control room's interface.

It took over 45 minutes for him to handle the crystals in the fastest and sloppiest way possible. Ves could have taken his time and potentially restored more systems, but time was of the essence. He already felt he had wasted enough time on exploring the lower levels and tinkering with all of these crystals.

The strain of supporting the Illustrious One's presence also began to stack up. The strain on his mind might not be as heavy as before, but using his own mind and spirit as a conduit was not a relaxing affair!

This caused him to think about potential solutions on how he could reduce the strain for future attempts.

His first thought was to take David's skull, cut off the upper bone cavity and use it as a key ingredient for a new headpiece.

Ves had good experiences with creating crowns, and right now he imagined he could utilize his recently gained expertise on biotechnology to create a personal crown made out of organic tissue!

Although it would probably look disturbing as hell, he believed that as long as he made it out of brain tissue similar to the one that occupied his cyborg leg, he could turn it into a dedicated 'dummy' brain that could serve as a purpose-built possession vehicle for his design spirits!

"What am I thinking? This is a ridiculous idea!"

He couldn't help but think about creating stuff like this in the few moments that he had completed a repair job and could gather his thoughts.

Ves completely fell in love with utilizing David's remains to assist in his spiritual manipulation efforts. He could get much more work done and augment his products with the unique qualities of a relevant design spirit if he could call upon their help without as many barriers as before.

Unfortunately, there was only one whole primordial human skeleton, and he needed to save it up for his mother.

Perhaps David may not have been the only ancient human that ended up in the Red Ocean. Ves was actually pretty certain that a lot more of them managed to reach this dwarf galaxy, but they were most likely scattered all over the place. The mathematical odds that he could find a pristine skeleton of another one throughout his journeys were so small that he pretty much assumed that he would never be able to find one in his lifetime.

That didn't mean he would stop looking entirely. He resolved to always pay attention to any news that could potentially lead him to the burial place of other primordial humans.

He could also break the odds entirely if he became more capable in the future. If Ylvaine managed to grow stronger in the following decades, then Ves could even use the Great Prophet's powers to track down a skeleton of the same quality as that of David!

In short, Ves did not need to develop too much of an attachment to David, because the Red Ocean should also have a Simon, Michael, Mary and a Joanna buried under a rock somewhere!

After Ves fixed up the last crystal on the last, he carefully inserted it into a slot and beheld his work.

He had decided to imitate the color arrangement of the original crystals and placed the purple and blue ones in the center while putting the lower-level crystals closer to the sides.

This produced a lot of gaps that were most pronounced immediately around the center.

"Can you activate it now, Ves?"

"Not yet, sister. I doubt this control system is easy to take over. A prison most definitely has multiple security safeguards. The long passage of time may have degraded them to an extent, but from how solid this place is built, I doubt the original constructors overlooked such an obvious security vulnerability. I need to create my own 'access key' based on the luminar crystal technology that I am familiar with. I don't have the time or the equipment to synthesize such a crystal from scratch, so I will have to make it from an existing crystal, preferably a purple one that has the highest access rights."

Chapter 4783 Crystal Improvisation

Ves bent down and picked up a large shard from a broken purple crystal. "I didn't feel confident in restoring this crystal, but retooling it into a luminar crystal should be doable as long as I know what I am doing."

"Didn't you just tell me that you don't have the right production equipment to produce a proper luminar crystal?" His sister skeptically asked.

"That is right. I don't have the right facilities in this chamber. My minifab is not comprehensive enough. I still have other options, though. Give me a second."

Ves opened up a couple of gaps in his Unending Regalia and used the same glue trick to physically attach multiple purple crystals onto his armor.

His body and his equipment flickered all of a sudden. His posture had abruptly changed and instead of carrying multiple broken purple crystal shards, he only carried a single whole piece this time!

"Ugh, I thought I could get away with only spending a single point, but I had to spend 5 of them because this crystal is more complicated to reengineer than I thought. I also had to buy a supplementary material to help fuse all of the gaps together."

Helena widened her intangible eyes at his abrupt change. Though their mother informed her that Ves possessed his own advantages, this went beyond storing precious goods in a hidden pocket space!

A lot of time had passed for Ves and Ves alone. As far as everyone else was concerned, they had remained frozen while he had taken his time to thoroughly reshape the broken remains of a purple alien crystal into an intact luminar crystal!

From the moment he 'came back' from wherever he went, David's skull began to light up more as the Illustrious One inspected and resonated with the newly-made luminar crystal.

Even though it wasn't connected to any power source, the purple luminar crystal immediately lit up as if it had become active!

When Helena leaned closer in order to see what Ves had done to it, she became surprised when she detected that it had acquired another quality that shouldn't have been there in the first place.

"This luminar crystal... is alive!"

"Yep." Ves grinned. "I worked on it long enough for me to make it alive and turn it into a totem of the Illustrious One."

"Why would you do that? Won't that complicate your attempts to gain access?"

"I don't believe so. What you are describing is definitely a risk, but I have thought a long time about this problem. This crystal here is much more special than is apparent on the surface. I have thought about many potential problems and preempted them with my preparations. Now I just need to finalize my tweaks after the Illustrious One has inspected my work."

One of the disadvantages to entering the System Space was that he had to rely on himself. He could not work together with a design spirit in order to borrow from another entity's expertise during the design and fabrication process.

Nonetheless, Ves already built up a sufficiently thorough theoretical framework to handle most of the work on his own. He just needed to make sure that his living product successfully established a connection to the Illustrious One and that its alien circuitry and programming were up to the task.

Ves extended a cable from a port built inside his Unending Regalia and connected it to the slot that he had purposefully built on the top of the purple crystal.

Helena found this to be a highly incongruous sight. The alien crystals in this chamber clearly weren't designed to interface with human computer systems, but Ves did not pay any attention to this rule!

He was able to tweak the programming and correct a few bugs with the help of the Illustrious One. The design spirit even took more direct action and added a few programming lines himself!

This reflected the Illustrious One's advantage as an alien design spirit. Composed of both an ancient crystal builder leader as well as the spiritual remnant of the Blinding One, the amalgamated design spirit possessed a lot of expertise in luminar crystal technology, though his scattered heritage meant that much of his understanding was instinctive in nature.

Still, Ves trusted the Illustrious One enough to double-check his work and propose more profound corrections.

Once Ves and his design spirit completed their last-minute inspection, the purple luminar crystal immediately entered the center slot.

"I think the most central slot is the most important one of all." Ves stated. "It conforms to the logic of this design approach."

"Is that what your mech designer experience is telling you? How can you know for sure?"

"I am a mech designer as well as an engineer, sister. Every creator adopts a similar perspective towards our vocation. Even aliens have to consider issues such as ease of use, effective communication, usability, universality and so on. This is especially the case if this facility was designed to be crewed by a coalition of races which I think is definitely the case."

The more species a group consisted of, the more a design team had to adopt universal and foolproof design mechanisms. So far, everything that Ves had observed from the crystalline control interface conformed to this basic truth.

"Nothing is happening after you have slotted your new crystal." Helena notified her brother.

"I know. Just putting it in doesn't necessarily do anything. The entire control interface needs to be switched on, and I don't know whether this stuff can still be powered after staying dormant all of this time. Theoretically, there should be a way to make it work, but I am still figuring out the details."

He stepped closer and took a close look at the interface, taking particular note of anything that resembled buttons or switches.

The console clearly used to possess an obvious means of turning it online, but he guessed that whoever wrecked this interface had completely demolished it to the point where there were no traces left.

However, there should always be a backup option in case the main switch became inoperable.

"Aha! Here it is! I knew I would find an alternative way to get this to work."

He eventually found a small control mechanism at the bottom of the main console. It was a rather clever location.

Once he pulled at a strange lever device, the surroundings lit up as the crystals slowly but surely started to light up as they finally received power for the first time in so many years.

A few crystals started to flicker, though. Ves could easily tell that they came from the crystals that looked to be in the worst shape. They needed to be repaired more thoroughly, but there was little he could do without possessing more specific expertise on this variety of crystal tech.

To gods like her, it was not essential to rely on too many external objects to gain supreme power.

Yet when Helena thought of the Five Scrolls Compact, she understood that the cultists ultimately got Ves narrowed his eyes and paid close attention to the luminar crystal that he painstakingly made. He had put so much effort into adding all kinds of functions to it. Now was the time to see whether his efforts to subvert the prison facility's control system would work out the way he hoped!

His sister hovered silently next to him, but did not speak out this time. She could not play a useful role at this junction. No matter how powerful she had become in the Nyxian Gap, it was hard for her to extend her power in the Red Ocean and far away from any living mechs and powerful totems.

She could only burn her own energy to maintain a weak and pale presence in Ves' presence. Though she had been able to offer her expertise and make useful discoveries such as uncovering the true nature of David's skeleton, she had no expertise at all in terms of technology.

As Helena continued to observe Ves working quietly with the Illustrious One to operate and monitor the activity of the newly made luminar crystal, she felt a lot more useless than she should.

She suddenly felt a lot more inadequate than before. Even though there were many factors that prevented her from providing more material aid to her little brother, her complete lack of understanding of technology exacerbated the problem.

Gods did not need to understand technology. They relied on their own power to affect reality and create favorable outcomes by force.

If there was ever a situation where Helena was incapable of solving an issue, then that meant she just wasn't powerful enough!

At most, she studied how to manipulate her divine power and develop her own divine abilities under the tutelage of her mother. Gods and beings that aspired to become gods must always work on cultivating their own power before anything else. A strong foundation was the basis of everything.

Yet as Helena quietly plucked the Dark Lotus from her hair again and turned it into its Pistol Form, she began to admire its craftsmanship and the power it conveyed to her. She had utilized the weapon that was perfectly tailored to her domain to excellent effect in the battles of the Nyxian Gap.

She understood a little more deeply than before that technology acted like a multiplier to both the weak and the strong.

A small and individually weak race like modern day humans had managed to conquer half of the Milky Way by relying on their excellent attainments in technology.

To humanity, using technology was essential to keep up with the other powerhouses in the cosmos.

To gods like her, it was not essential to rely on too many external objects to gain supreme power.

Yet when Helena thought of the Five Scrolls Compact, she understood that the cultists ultimately got beaten because they had been overtaken by technology that directly targeted their strengths.

It was one of the many instances where the 'weak' overcame the 'strong' with the help of clever thinking as well as the use of technology.

Perhaps it was time for Helena to utilize her considerable intellect and learning capability to master certain forms of technology as well.

If other fellow 'design spirits' such as the Illustrious One could gain a large proficiency in luminar crystal technology, what stopped her from learning how circuitry worked?

She was certain that she could learn basic science subjects and become proficient in a few more advanced subjects.

The problem was that technology was not a part of her nature. Unlike entities such as Vulcan, Helena had no inherent affinity with tech and could never master it to the point of giving Ves a run for his money.

Gods were rather pitiful in that sense. For all of Helena's potential in becoming one with the fundamental concept of death, it was hard for entities like her to become any good in matters outside of her narrow specialization.

If this was not the case, then the strongest practitioners of the Five Scrolls Compact did not need to rely on so many subordinates and daughter organizations to fulfill their technical needs!

For all of her mother's criticism towards the Five Scrolls Compact for refusing to keep up with the times, wasn't she repeating the same mistakes?

Helena found that her mother still maintained an aloof attitude towards technology.

No matter whether it was mechs or starships, neither of them interested her mother that much. She didn't even possess a good understanding of the current version of the Devil Tiger, which had been upgraded far beyond its original specifications.

Neither Helena, Cynthia or Ryncol knew what kind of tech powered it these days!

Just as the Daughter of Death increased her resolve to become more familiar with technology, the shaky and incomplete control interface suddenly started to produce a series of sounds!

"What is it doing?!"

"These are sound notifications." Ves responded as he continued to control the functioning of the luminar crystal through the cable connected to his armor. "I think we have just managed to get past the initial checks that are required to boot up the main system. I don't think we are in the clear yet, though. If my suspicions are correct, we should be greeted with a more robust security system soon enough."

Chapter 4784 Ves the Alien Computer Administrator

Ves did not have to wait long for the next development to occur. A few more seconds passed by until a rippling and slightly misaligned projection appeared in front of them. It depicted a white ball that immediately started to communicate by making alien sounds!

[AWSQDQ#*WR#Q*Q! ADQEWIDJIWQO#!]

"That doesn't sound so friendly, brother..."

"Quiet. Let me listen for a moment." Ves spoke.

Even though the white ball continued to screech out alien words that sounded like gibberish, Ves listened carefully without trying to miss a single word.

Other screens also appeared. They depicted a lot of dense alien writing that looked completely indecipherable.

Once the white ball stopped producing any further sounds, Ves lowered his head and looked thoughtful. He communicated with the Illustrious One as evidenced by the increased activity generated by the primordial skull that Ves still held onto all of this time.

"So did you understand anything that the white ball said?"

"Nope." Ves replied. "Neither the Illustrious One nor I understood any word spoken by this computer avatar."

"Wait, don't you excel at communication? I have witnessed you converse with many different species while ignoring the language barrier."

"That is different, sister. I communicated with them face-to-face on a spiritual level. I was speaking directly to their spirits in other words. This ancient computer system obviously isn't alive, so I can't understand it, let alone know how to operate its interface."

He half-hoped that he could solve this problem easily enough by relying on his automatic translation program. He had downloaded extensive language libraries from the MTA. They could detect and translate known alien writing and speech to an impressively accurate degree, but frustratingly enough, the database found no match.

Helena frowned. "The Illustrious One can't help either?"

"No. Don't worry. I already expected this to happen. It would be too much of a stretch to assume that this old computer system would conveniently translate all of its messages in standard human language. Let me try out a potential solution."

Ves began to split his focus and call upon the Phase King.

"Did... did you just speak phase whale language?"

"Yup." Ves grinned. "I suspected it would do so. This pocket space was originally created by the phase Though he did not summon the alien design spirit as extensively as before, the strain on his mind and spirit still rose remarkably as he was already preoccupied with maintaining the Illustrious One's presence!

There was a strong reason why Ves called upon the Phase King's assistance this time. He cleared his throat and tried to shout an alien word!

"RHHHUUGHHA!"

The white ball suddenly shook as it took in the alien word spoken. It suddenly took on a purple shade, signifying that it had suddenly changed modes!

[Wuhggguueh. Rurghwurweew. RRRRhhuuughg.]

"Did... did you just speak phase whale language?"

"Yup." Ves grinned. "I suspected it would do so. This pocket space was originally created by the phase whales. I am sure this prison facility was built under their auspices as well. It makes sense that the computer interface would respond to the language of the most powerful and most revered race of this galaxy."

"I doubt that is enough to give you access to these alien systems. Surely other aliens must have learned this language as well, including the prisoners themselves."

Now that the interface changed to phase whale language, Ves was able to verbally communicate and manipulate it a lot more effectively than before.

Even if Ves did not call upon the Phase King, he still would have been able to rely on the automatic translation program to communicate with the ancient alien interface.

As Ves exchanged a few words with the purple ball, he eventually fell silent as he kept receiving the same sounds.

"Let me guess. You need to verify your rights to gain access to the prison systems, am I correct?"

Ves sighed. "You are right. I was hoping that just pretending to be a phase whale might get me in, but it is not so simple. I need to supply a password of sorts to get through this latest security check. Even then, I suspect that I will encounter additional barriers that I am not so sure I can overcome."

"Does that mean this plan is a failure?"

"Hey, have a bit more confidence in your brother, will you? I anticipated this reaction as well. The prison's layout and construction are so tightly put together than their software and their control systems are just as well-protected. It is pointless for me to wrestle them one by one. My plan to gain control is much more direct than that. If I can't subdue this control system in the way that I am supposed to do it, then I will just tear out this annoying purple ball and replace it with my own creation!"

"What?!"

"You must have wondered what is so special about my purple luminar crystal, right?" Ves grinned as he directed a glance at his sister.

"I did..."

"Well, the reason why I put so much effort into creating it and making it alive is because I designed it to hijack this stubborn alien control system!"

He no longer said anything further but worked together with the Illustrious One to start his assault!

The purple crystal began to exude more light and power as it followed its programming and forcefully tried to take over the alien systems!

This was anything but simple as the tech bases and the programming languages were entirely different. The only way they could communicate at all was because Ves had added in the phase whale language to his luminar crystal.

The alien computing systems did not appreciate the intrusions. The purple ball began to produce a lot more ominous noises. A large number of working crystals started to flicker and pulse in a more aggressive manner.

An entire battle took place on a virtual battlefield!

Though Helena could not see this battle directly, she could sense from Ves' mood swings and the evolving light show that the alien security systems were trying to put up a notable fight!

However, the heavily damaged state of this interface worked against it this time!

"Hahaha!" Ves laughed as he continued to coordinate the luminar crystal's activities. "These heavily damaged crystals have lost a lot of functionality, and many of them are outright missing or broken. A single lone purple luminar crystal can't fight against the surviving security measures, but it has multiple advantages including the hacking suite built into my Unending Regalia as well as the computing support of my cranial implant!"

The state of native alien computing and processing technology in the Red Ocean was much more primitive than the equivalent tech in the Milky Way.

It was one of the reasons why the Big Two's warfleets continually outperformed native forces. A notable superiority in data analysis, mathematical processing and pattern recognition allowed human warships and mechs to achieve great results while using less power.

In contrast, the alien warfleets had to rely on stupider means to overcome human forces, such as relying on a crushing numbers advantage or saturating their targets with an excess of firepower.

Although the gap between the two was rapidly shrinking due to human traitors leaking valuable technological secrets and even complete production equipment to alien civilizations, that was a problem confined to normal space.

This ancient alien prison facility was stuck in time. Its tech was horribly out of date even when Ves took the glacial technological progression of the Red Ocean into account.

Ves took great advantage of this difference in technological strength and employed more and more processing power at his disposal to crush the damaged and incomplete security systems of the control interface by force!

Nothing reflected the increasingly dire state of the alien control system by the increasingly less stable appearance of the projected purple ball.

At this time, it looked as if several invisible hands were pulling it in multiple directions, causing it to grow spikes and looking as if it was getting ripped apart!

DRUUUUUM!

A loud but incredibly deep noise rumbled through the entire control room!

The floor shook, causing Ves' body to shake as well as his footing grew less stable.

He had the sense that an important mechanism of a device buried underneath his teeth had just turned.

It could be the release of a giant mechanical lock. It could be the breakdown of an ancient computer system. It could be the activation of a hidden contingency system.

Whatever the case, Ves had the premonition that the control interface that he had been trying to access had become a lot more active after this profound but unknown change!

The projection fizzled out all of a sudden. No matter whether it was the white ball or the purple ball, the crystals no longer projected any image to Ves anymore.

Helena became more alert. "What is the matter? Did you manage to unlock it, Ves?"

"I did... well... I am not so sure." Ves frowned. "I basically overloaded the security systems and employed a lot of advanced exploits that could get me through the security checks one way or another. Just as I was about to approach the final security measure, I think I tripped an emergency mechanism. Right now, I get the feeling that it is trying to communicate with a second control room that is located on the upper floors."

"Wait, that does not sound good."

"Relax. A connection can't be established because the communication channels between the two have already decayed over the years. It is clear that this place is only a secondary control room, and that everything it does is subordinate to the primary control room. In the event that communication between the two cannot be established, this control room will assume an emergency posture and operate in a more restricted but expedient fashion. At least, that is what is supposed to happen. So many variables have changed that I don't entirely know what will happen next."

Eventually, the control system finally projected a new image.

A purple sixteen-sided orb produced an aggressive alien sound.

[WWHUUGHH WWWWUUVVV.]

"What is it saying this time, Ves?"

His expression grew more serious. "I've reached the final identity verification check. If I cannot prove I am an authorized prison official, the security system will self-destruct and I will lose access to it entirely."

Helena grew alarmed. "Unless you can hack this system further, it will be impossible for you to overcome this test. All your work will be in vain."

"Who said anything about that? I have anticipated this outcome as well." He told her before lifting the skull in his armored hand. "Thank you, Illustrious One. I will take it from here."

The luminar design spirit cut off his connection to Ves' mind and David's skull, causing the room to lose a lot of light.

Ves did not care. Blinky immediately appeared from his head and dove right into the skull that had become a lot emptier than before!

Mrow!

As Blinky took up residence in the primordial human skull, it began to exude a lot of vitality as the Star Cat brought a strong amount of vitality!

As the skull seemingly came to life, Ves lifted it forward and barked an alien phrase with the help of the Phase King.

"RHUUUGH WUWWUZURRRRUUZ."

The room rumbled again, though not as much as before. The many-sided purple construct buzzed like it was trying to parse information that it couldn't properly process.

It suddenly disappeared, only for an elaborate projection to appear in its place.

Helena looked with astonishment as a cat of all creatures appeared!

The electronic blue cat looked familiar to her. She had occasionally seen it around Ves and other mech designers when they were engrossed in their work.

[Reporting, sir. Connections established. Crystal processors are engaging. 12.9 percent of all registered systems have been restored. Connection to the primary mainframe remains offline and is currently blocked from this end according to your instructions. Attempting to restore more systems but permissions are insufficient. In the process of subverting access. Will take 27.6 seconds to produce additional results.]

"Is that... Bygul?"

"No. He's just a pale copy of the AI avatar of my flagship." Ves shook his head. "This is a poor and inferior imitation of that advanced AI that I have stuffed in my memory banks. It is not as versatile as my original intelligent assistant, but it will do for the moment."

"What did you do, Ves?"

He grinned. "Isn't it obvious? I ripped out whatever AI system regulates and controls these systems and replaced it with my own! Modern human technology will always beat ancient and outdated alien tech! This is the power of progress, hahaha!"

Chapter 4785 Control Authority

The actual processes that Ves used to subvert control over the alien control interface was a lot more complicated than he described to his sister.

He knew that Helena possessed no background in these affairs. How could she appreciate the ingenuity that he came up with in the days he remained stuck inside the System Space? The living luminar crystal that he had meticulously designed and synthesized was far from simple as it looked.

From being able to interface with his own computing systems to becoming alive to the point where it could circumvent a part of the security measures of the alien control systems, this was a marvel of human and alien engineering that not only allowed him to gain normal access, but also unlocked the highest permissions that were available!

Ves turned to the mysterious primordial human skull that had assisted his efforts in numerous ways.

Ever since he dug David's skeleton out of the funeral pyre, Ves guessed that the ancient human's identity in this place was not so simple.

Why would anyone bother to pile up so many powerful alien carcasses whose bodies were no doubt treasures in themselves and burn it all to honor a single deceased individual?

The only answer that made sense was that David possessed a higher status among the natives of the time!

In addition to that, it did not make much sense to lock a spiritually potent individual in a prison that was completely designed to restrain phase lords.

Ves theorized that David somehow gained employment here because he possessed a lot of personal power but was not susceptible to the restraints targeted towards phasewater manipulating creatures.

Whether his theory was true or not, Ves believed so much in this theory that he was willing to gamble that he could go through a final identity verification check as long as he used David's skull to fool the control system into thinking that a legitimate prison worker tried to gain access!

As Ves took in a lot of information through the electronic cat avatar and his direct connection through the luminar crystal, he gasped as he became impressed by how much access he gained.

"What can you do now that you managed to obtain control?" Helena eagerly asked.

"I can control a number of random and miscellaneous functions." He slowly replied. "It's too much for me to list, but most of them are rather scattered and low-level. For example, I can alter the air composition and gravity of different cells so that they can better accommodate prisoners of different races. A lot of control crystals are broken or damaged, so I don't have nearly as many options as I should."

It was all a bit random and disorganized. In order to gain a better overview of what he could do, he transmitted commands that caused a projection of the map of the facility to appear.

The three-dimensional map showed the structure of the entire prison according to the data held in the crystals.

The exterior of the prison facility resembled an egg. Ves suspected that it was built like this in order to completely fit inside a spherical-shaped pocket space.

The map projected by the alien control system roughly corresponded with the map created by the Phase King. The former was a lot more comprehensive and even provided many clues to the roles of many chambers that had since been emptied out until there was nothing left.

"Look." Ves pointed at the hundreds of smaller cells located in the periphery. "According to the labels and the descriptions, these cells are truly meant to hold weaker individuals. The security measures surrounding them are rather light. Gaining control over them is not that difficult now that I have gained high-level permissions."

Ves had also made sure to differentiate every room by assigning different colors.

"Why are only a part of those cells highlighted in green?"

"That is because only those specific cells respond to this control system. I can't control the other ones. Whether it is because they are destroyed or because I don't have the right control crystals, I am not sure. It is probably a combination of both."

The ones where he gained access to were lit up in green.

The ones where he only gained partial access were lit up in orange.

The ones where he could not exert effective control over were lit up in red.

The majority of the cells were lit up in red, which signified that Ves could not exert any control over them. He could not even query their status, so he did not know whether they were broken or filled with all manner of unspeakable monsters.

Ves immediately made two important observations as he studied the map.

The first was that of the small number of cells that were lit up in green, many of them happened to be familiar to him. Ves had been stuck in one of them, and he also confirmed that the other green cells conformed with the ones he confirmed held other human prisoners.

"Does the primary control room possess access to these cells as well?" He asked.

[Affirmative.] The electronic cat responded.

"Can you give me a log that lists all of the recent commands involving these cells?"

[Denied. You do not have the permission to retrieve this information.]

That was okay. This was not essential information.

"Can I release any current occupants from these cells?"

[Denied.]

"Can I transport myself and the occupants of these cells back to the planet where they came from?" Ves critically asked.

[Denied.]

"Reason."

[Inmates can be brought directly inside the cells with a lower permission level, but only the highest permission level can directly transport prisoners outside of this facility. At most, your permission level will allow you to shift any current cell occupants to AW#*R#R# for their regularly scheduled recreation and socialization periods.]

Ves asked a few more questions and found that he could take advantage of this mechanism.

"Can I change the period upon which the inmates are scheduled to return to their cells?"

"Can I grant permission to the inmates to exit these halls?"

"Are there any exits to this facility that can be accessed and used with lower permission levels?"

[The primary gate is the main entrance and exit of this prison. It must first be unlocked by transmitting a temporary release command from the primary control room located at @&EF#R#EFA. It must then be activated at the location using your own permissions.]

Helena smiled. "You have gained a roadmap to free everyone and bring them out of this prison."

"I don't believe it is that simple." Ves spoke as he focused his attention on the upper floors.

Both the control room as well as the main gate were situated here. The culprits who hijacked many important figures of Davute most definitely occupied those chambers!

"Can you give me a count of living organisms that are currently present on those levels?"

[Denied.]

"Reason."

[Insufficient permissions, no access.]

Ves couldn't scout the details on the upper floors. They were entirely dyed in red, so there was nothing he could do to change these circumstances.

"Can I disable the energy shields on this level?"

[Affirmative.]

His eyes lit up. "Disable them and grant me access to those storage containers."

[Proceeding... task completed.]

"Hahaha!"

All of those containers filled with phasewater had become accessible to him! Now he just needed to make sure that they would remain in his possession and not get stolen by those who came afterwards.

Ves proceeded to make a few inquiries about transporting the containers away, but the secondary control room did not play along with him this time.

"Too many control crystals are missing." Ves frowned. "This facility is in a direr state than I hoped."

"We should work with what we have, brother."

"You are right. Let me see whether I can free my relatives and the other human prisoners. I can't take them out of this facility, but I can sure as hell take them out of their cells and give them a fighting chance."

He began to issue a series of commands that would make this all happen.

The only problem was that he could not free his fellow humans right away.

[Denied. The next scheduled recreational period starts in 21.5 RHUGHURU.]

"What does that mean, Ves?"

"It means I can only teleport the inmates in roughly 86 minutes."

"That is not too long."

"You're right, but I am afraid that whoever is in control upstairs will notice what I am doing and try to hinder me from enacting my plan."

Ultimately, he had little choice. Time was running out and he needed to take action sooner rather than later.

Ves therefore proceeded to formulate a series of commands. They did not exceed the limits of his permissions as he feared that doing too much might alert whoever was in control of the primary control room.

"Alright, we have one-and-a-half hours before we can rendez-vous with the other humans. We need to move quickly to prepare for an upcoming escape attempt."

The base suddenly rumbled. Both Ves and Helena were caught off guard by what was happening.

"Did you do this, Ves?!"

"Hold on for a second. I need to check the systems." Ves furrowed his brows.

As he began to interrogate the alien computer systems directly, he only managed to obtain scattered information.

[...68 percent of available power is being rerouted to FE*E#*WRFE#...]

[...Access denied...]

[...Permissions overridden...]

[...Conflicting orders...]

[...FROZEN INSTRUCTIONS...]

[...ERROR ERROR ERROR...]

[...WARNING: DAMAGE TO PRIMARY CONTAINMENT...]

[...EMERGENCY LOCKOUT... ERROR...]

"Damnit!"

"What is wrong?!"

"I got locked out!" Ves cursed. "Whoever was in control of the primary control system likely took note of the changes that I have made. They tried to counteract my orders, but their permission levels likely aren't any higher than my own. We sparred a bit and caused the damaged control systems to glitch out even more. Due to our fights, both of us have been locked out for an entire cycle."

"A lockdown shouldn't have caused the entire facility to shake so much." Helena noted.

"You're right. There are multiple possible reasons why that happened, but the most likely explanation is that the fellow on the other side used a purple control crystal to activate a specific protocol."

"What sort of protocol?"

"I don't know." Ves admitted. "It's a high-level restricted setting that can only be activated by the warden or another bigshot and cannot easily be reversed once it has commenced. From what I have gathered, it affects the entire facility, possibly in a permanent fashion. The good news is that there are so many breakdowns and so much loss of power that it takes a couple of hours for this high-level protocol to take off. My people and I need to get out of here before it begins because I have a strong feeling that we don't want to be here when it starts!"

Ves cursed the laziness of the Big Two and the colonists once again. Why couldn't they perform more than a cursory search for hidden and abandoned pocket spaces? Surely they had to know that the phase whales were addicted to creating them! Their race existed so long that practically every star system likely hid an enclave of theirs!

"We need to move back down to the storage hall where all of the remaining diluted phasewater is stored. The energy shields have been switched off, so I should have easy access to it all. I can do a lot with phasewater."

After all of this trouble, there was no way Ves wanted to get out without a lot of personal benefits!

If he could use the same exploit that he performed on the skeleton to all of the diluted phasewater, then he could potentially harvest hundreds of kilograms of pure phasewater in the end!

That was an extremely handsome prize and could definitely help him reach his ambitious goal of transforming his entire Larkinson Army into a quasi-first-class transphasic mech force!

Chapter 4786 Inventory Exploit

"Haha, the energy shields are no longer active. Phasewater, here I come!"

As soon as Ves returned to the storage hall that contained hundreds of alien phasewater barrels, he started to track down the containers that still contained traces of diluted phasewater.

He had already mapped them out during his first exploration, so he knew exactly where to go. He passed through the perimeter that used to be protected by an energy shield with ease and immediately sought to pry open the top of the long 'barrel' so that he could siphon away the phasewater.

Getting the phasewater out of the barrel was a bit awkward. Ves needed to fly into the barrel and maintain a careful distance above the stagnant pool before extending a pipe to suck the phasewater into a special storage container built into his armor.

Once he loaded up on the diluted substance, he entered the System Space and dumped his cargo into the so-called Vault of Eternity, which claimed to be able to hold anything at any quantity.

Ves repeated this process a few times until he encountered a new situation.

He couldn't enter the System Space anymore.

"What the hell? System! What's wrong!?"

[The user is currently exploiting an unintended interaction based on the Inventorization of his equipment. The Mech Designer System must bear an increasing burden to store the net inflow of additional material that is only tangentially related to your Inventorized item. 1 existing rule has been clarified and 1 new rule has been established. They are as follows:]

[Any Inventorized object can bring in additional material objects to the System Space provided that it does not exceed the volume of a standardized unit scaled to the Inventorized object. The Vault of Eternity will also only be able to accommodate objects up to the same standardized unit volume.]

[If the user wishes to acquire additional storage space in the Vault of Eternity, he must rent it from the Vault of Eternity at an escalating charge. 1 cubic meter can be rented for 10 Ascension Points, up to a limit of 10 cubic meters. Every cubic meter after that can be rented for 100 Ascension Points, up to a limit of 100 cubic meters. This pattern will repeat into infinity. The renting period is 1 standard year starting from the instant you have rented the spaces.]

Ves' expression grew incredibly ugly at this point.

Ever since the Mech Designer System completed its update and unveiled the System Space, Ves had entered it numerous times without noticing the full implications of what was happening.

Not only did he enter it with his full body, he also came with all of his clothes and all of the objects he carried on his person!

None of them had been Inventorized, but the System decided to pull them in anyway, which Ves was grateful for as it allowed him to keep his modesty.

However, this interaction also proved that the System did not need to apply any special treatment to pull objects into its mysterious System Space. It could probably pull in anything provided that it wasn't anything exaggerated like an entire capital ship or a whole planet.

What really stopped Ves from bringing in anything substantial was the rules set by the System itself.

This was where his Unending Regalia came in. Ever since he used one of his tickets to Inventorize it and thereby bind it to the System, he noticed that he could pull it in even when he altered or upgraded its configuration.

This proved that any Inventorized object did not have to permanently remain stuck in its original form. It could be damaged, upgraded, downsized and even upsized and still be able to dematerialize and return to the Vault of Eternity as a whole!

What he did last time stood out as a particularly dramatic example of this interaction. Ves had stripped out the original Unending alloy exterior plating and put thin layers of transphasic first-class alloys in their place.

All of the plates remained attached to the Unending Regalia without any issue!

Ves then came up with the theory that he could continue to bring in objects as long as they were attached to his combat armor in a somewhat plausible manner.

The System's mechanism for bringing in Inventorized objects would conduct an automatic test that determined whether anything attached to it was 'part' of the combat armor.

Using glue to attach additional objects that had nothing to do with the combat armor or his personal loadout seemed to be enough. That was how he was able to import almost an entire skeleton into his System Space which included the whole pelvis!

He had hoped the System would stay shut and allow him to proceed as he wished, but the damn System didn't play along.

It was alive and it could think. It could spot damn well that Ves was trying to pull the wool over its eyes.

Treating it as a regular dumb automated system was a serious mistake.

Fortunately, the System did not impose any penalties. It just clarified the situation and implicitly acquiesced to his behavior.

After Ves spent the following minutes on testing the new limitations, he found that the maximum volume of free storage space that he obtained roughly corresponded to the dimensions of a rectangular container that could hold his Unending Regalia in an unpacked form.

If Ves could create a box with straight sides and put his Unending Regalia inside, then he could pour in a lot of additional water up until it reached the upper edge.

This was how much additional stuff he could effectively bring into the System Space!

Anything after that required him to pay precious Ascension Points to free up more storage space in the Vault of Eternity.

What rankled him the most was that the cheapskate of a Mech Designer System did not sell those spaces outright, but rented them on a yearly basis!

If Ves did not choose to renew his rent by paying additional AP, then the System would ruthlessly dump the vault contents into normal space.

This would be incredibly disastrous for Ves if the expunged contents consisted of phasewater!

Diluted or not, the exotic could easily kill people on contact if it came into contact with their exposed bodies!

Ves could just imagine a scenario where he collaborated with Gloriana on a mech design project in the design lab like usual.

As he became incredibly engrossed by a passion project, he might ignore the System's warning message about renewing his expiring rent, thereby causing it to dump at least an entire cubic meter of phasewater immediately outside of his body!

All of that potent liquids would wash over his work console and splash directly against Gloriana's shield generator!

No matter whether it was a conventional device or a transphasic one, the sheer excess of phasewater spilling out of Ves would overload the energy shield or at the very least generate lethal spatial fluctuations at close range that might cause his wife's body to be ripped asunder!

What a tragedy!

Ves could not let that happen to the woman he loved and the mother of his children. He became understandably reluctant to rent any storage from the Vault of Eternity.

He had little choice, though. He was stuck alone in hostile territory as usual. He could not cart off all of this diluted phasewater to the vast vaults underneath the Cat Nest or the many cargo bays of his main fleet.

He painfully winced as he coughed up 2 AP to open up 2 cubic meters of storage space in the Vault of Eternity.

At least Ves did not need to worry about building special containers to hold the diluted phasewater, as the Vault already promised to store any items deposited inside it under optimal circumstances. None of the phasewater would decay over time and they wouldn't damage anything stored in the vicinity either.

By the time Ves completed his long and exhausting harvesting run, he managed to harvest 1402 kilograms of diluted phasewater.

Of that amount, Ves had figured out that 13 percent of it consisted of real phasewater on average. The rest was mostly water intermingled with stabilizing substances that helped suppress any spatial activity.

That meant he harvested around 182 kilograms of phasewater in total.

He would have loved to extract all of the phasewater out of the diluted mixture right away, but that required a significant amount of time and effort to arrange.

Given that he would have to spend at least 1 day in the System Space to set it all up, he simply did not bother to go through all of this trouble and just settled for buying enough storage space to contain the diluted mixture.

The additional storage space would still be useful for an entire year after he had bought it, so he did not mind it if he purified the phasewater later.

"The question now is whether I need to spend time and resources to build extra gear to support what may come next." Ves frowned.

It would cost far too much AP for him to craft additional gear for his troops. His honor guards along with the security guards working for the state were already well-equipped.

Though the group of soon-to-be-freed humans also consisted of a lot of civilian non-combatants, they were all VIPs or relatives of important figures, so it was extremely likely that they carried personal shield generators themselves.

As long as they stayed in the rear where enemy forces couldn't reach them, they should remain out of the fight.

He could always remedy the situation by entering the System Space and spend enough time inside it to fix up a new solution.

There was not much time left before the prison would supposedly teleport the human captives to the recreation and socialization chamber.

Hopefully, these systems hadn't decayed to the point where they became inoperable. He made sure to double-check them when he still had access to the systems connected to the secondary control room. The cells were marked green for good reasons.

"I need to be there to greet all of those people. Who knows what they would do if they were left to their own devices."

Ves had been extraordinarily productive during this crisis. He spent several subjective days on trying to find a way out while everyone else only experienced a few hours in their cells.

He had already used much of his additional time on planning out the measures he would have to take in order to command all of the scattered people that would get confused quite soon.

He could already imagine how bored, frustrated and feared they would be when they showed up in another strange place all of a sudden.

"Goddamn Davute." Ves cursed again. "This will be the last time I visit this cursed planet."

Helena gave him an understanding look. "I do not blame you. Do you want me to be present or absent while you try to herd your latest flock?"

"Hmmm... maybe it is better if you stick around. Most people won't know what to make of you, and that is good. We need to maintain a strong rhythm as time is running out. I don't know what our enemies upstairs are doing, but I have a feeling that the earlier quake is not a good development."

Ves could feel that ever since he confronted the culprits behind this whole event, the entire prison became a lot less stable and enduring. He had a premonition that the entire facility may no longer pass through the ages as leisurely as before. Its existence might get cut short very soon!

"Have you come any closer to deducing the identity of our current adversaries and why they chose to abduct so many Davutan leaders?"

"I am no closer to the answers than before." Ves replied. "It doesn't matter too much. It won't take long before we can find out the answers. No matter what motivations possessed them to launch an attack on us, their actions are unforgivable. Whether they are agents of Karlach or Davute, I will smash anyone who thinks they can mess with me or my family!"

Chapter 4787 Birthright

The large and expansive hall that was supposed to serve as the recreation and socialization area used to be a lot more pleasant in the distant past.

Though Ves had few clues of how it actually looked, Ves imagined that there used to be a lot more greenery and brighter colors.

The place was a means to reward and rehabilitate well-behaving phase lords. This was not easy as those delusional aliens all saw themselves as gods. They could be as bad as the members of the Five Scrolls Compact in that regard.

Nonetheless, Ves guessed that one of the reasons why the cells were designed to be so empty, monotonous and barren was to break the wills of unruly and overly inconsiderate phase lords.

Those nunners, orvens and other aliens that had just succeeded in adding phasewater to their bodies must probably be full of themselves. They had already cleared the hardest hurdle and became insanely confident that they would be able to attain full godhood in time!

If they became crazy with power and started to break the rules of society on a massive scale, then their reign of terror had to end one way or another.

"This place isn't a traditional prison per se." Ves spoke as he continued to move in the direction of the recreation area. "Gods that cannot rein themselves in need to regain their patience, humility and respect towards authority. That is what this prison is actually for. It is probably a socialization center for inexperienced and delusional phase lords. It's a boarding school for troubled and recalcitrant gods!"

His sister thought about this analogy and reluctantly nodded. "I suppose so. The native aliens of the Red Ocean have odd views towards gods. They solely obsess over materialistic factors such as phasewater and body transformation. I believe that they do not exercise their mental discipline that much. They lack a single coherent guiding ideology that can ground them and maintain their connection to their original species. It is much different in the old galaxy. Even the highest practitioners of the Compact dedicate themselves to strong beliefs. Their faith in the Sacred Scrolls and the immortal gods ensures that each of them will remain united and motivated to fight for a common cause."

It was easy to look down on what the natives considered to be gods, but Ves did not dare to underestimate phase lords too much.

For all of their power, spiritual entities had a hard time in the Milky Way and beyond. The current environment was not conducive to their growth and many humans started off as defective in this department. Their journey to godhood was fraught with peril and insurmountable obstacles as they needed to repair their deficiencies by going above and beyond.

Pure spiritual entities did not possess as many limits, but were constantly at risk of getting blown away into the merciless and deathly imaginary realm. They needed physical anchors as well as a steady supply of spiritual feedback to prevent themselves from losing their power and fading into irrelevance.

In contrast, phase lords had it relatively easier. They just needed to figure out a way to safely absorb phasewater into their bodies and go from there. The only reason why a lot of aliens never managed to overcome this starting hurdle was because they needed to develop the mentality to go beyond their safe confines and have the courage to take an exceedingly large risk to their health and life.

However, once they overcame this starting hurdle, it appeared that phase lords relaxed a little too quickly and became drunk by all of the power and status they gained at once. This transition was too abrupt and if there were no senior phase lords in their circle that could restrain their impulses, who knew what they would do with all of that power!

As Ves spent more time in the prison facility, he felt as if he began to feel as if he steadily managed to decipher its history and purpose.

Many details such as its architecture, its security measures, its design and its age provided a lot of clues to Ves. His imagination even conjured up illusions about how the place looked when it was in its heyday.

Dozens of different alien species worked together under a strong authority. They behaved firmly against the misbehaving phase lords but also showed understanding and compassion.

Phase lords were rare in the Red Ocean and each of them possessed a lot of value. The supply of phasewater in the Red Ocean was not great, but there was still enough to satisfy every would-be god under normal circumstances.

Perhaps the Red Ocean's multiracial community was a representative example of how a galactic society might look like in an age where multiple different races lived alongside each other.

Though the relations between the major races such as the phase whales, the nunsters, the orvens and so on were not that harmonious, they at least did not get locked in an eternal struggle to the death. Individuals from different races had no problems with working together with each other as long as they shared enough interests.

The Milky Way used to operate like this as well. The human race badly wanted to become a part of it, but the problem was that it used to be too weak to gain a proper seat at the table.

In the end, power mattered the most!

Since humanity couldn't gain the respect and consideration of the aliens in the Milky Way by playing by the rules, it was better to flip the table and demand respect by force!

At least, that was the prevailing logic among humans today.

Learning about the hidden truth of humanity's deeper and more complicated history put an entirely different spotlight on this matter.

Unless Helena and his birth mother were completely wrong, the history of human lineage and the history of the Milky Way Galaxy were much more complicated than he assumed.

Major events took place hundreds of thousands of years ago that caused the primordial humans to rise in a galaxy that was much more conducive to spiritual ascension.

Unfortunately, a mysterious calamity occurred that ultimately forced this earlier strain of humanity to disappear from the stage.

What Ves found strange was how completely primordial humans fell from grace. This used to be a race that could travel the stars and occupy other planets.

A lot of difficult questions arose from the information that Ves had available.

How did almost all of the primordial humans disappear so suddenly?

How could they have cleaned up their traces so extensively that hardly any alien civilizations in the Milky Way learned of the powerful humans that preceded their rise?

Why go through the trouble to develop baseline humans in their place and settle them on Earth to give them the illusion they evolved naturally on the planet?

Did primordial humans ever had a plan to engineer a comeback, and if so, would there be any room left for baseline humans in their society?

The possible answers to all of these questions were both profound and frightening. Ves had the feeling that he had finally touched upon the deeper truths behind humanity's rise, the origins of the Five Scrolls Compact and perhaps the nature of his own birth!

As Ves turned his attention to himself, he began to doubt his identity once again.

"Helena."

"Yes, brother?"

"All this recent talk about primordial humans got me thinking. Is our mother descended from this group of ancient remnants?"

The spiritual goddess directed a deeper look at him. "You can say that. There are distinctions that I will not get into as you are not a part of this complicated world, but generally speaking she bears little difference from the ancient humans who have once populated the Milky Way. The potency of her blood and soul are identical to that of the powerful human gods that once wielded great power in their heyday."

"Am I a blood descendant of my mother."

"Yes." Helena said. "I did not exist at that time, but my mother has made it more than clear that you are her son. She carried you to term in her stomach and took great care of you during your earliest years. A part of her blood is running through your veins and you have gained great advantages due to your heritage."

"Are you sure about that?" Ves furrowed his brows. "Because from my perspective, I grew up as a dead-normal baseline human. I am pretty sure that all of the medical checkups and so on would have clued people to the fact that my physiology is drastically different from a normal human. I did not grow up eating all of the exotic materials that are required to grow an extraordinary physique either. Shouldn't I have starved to death when I was young due to my inability to absorb the right nutrients to support my more demanding growth?"

This was a clear contradiction in logic. An authentic primordial human like David managed to grow a powerful skeleton that was grown out of a mixture of treasure materials while Ves was pretty sure he possessed normal bones before he graduated from university.

"You think too simply, brother." Helena replied. "I told you earlier that our mother had been struck by a curse that caused her to grow weaker over time. I did not describe the nature of this curse too deeply, but one of the major consequences is that her physical state deteriorates rapidly over time. Though she managed to delay her degeneration, by the time she settled in the Bright Republic, she had lost much of her original power, making her almost indistinguishable from baseline humans. The only difference is that she was still able to exert great control over her own genes and body tissue, allowing her to prolong her demise by conducting an orderly transformation to a lower form of humanity."

"Oh."

The control needed to do all of this while constantly suffering in pain and losing more and more power must be insane!

"Her body has lost the qualities that made them different. This meant that you were able to grow up as a normal human baby for the most part. You were almost entirely unaffected by the burdens that primordial humans must bear to live in the environment of these modern times. That is a blessing, not a curse."

The answer disappointed Ves. He thought that he gained a lot of special and cool abilities due to the higher life state of his mother.

"Did I truly get nothing special from my mother?" He asked.

"That is not true, silly brother. You are always special. Our mother used to be a powerful practitioner once. Even in the last years of her life, her soul was stronger than that of any baseline human. When you were growing in her womb, she was able to pass on a part of that strength to you. Her body, though drained of what made it strong, was still able to impart a trace of the great potential of primordial humans in your unborn body."

Ves turned back to her. "What does that mean...?"

"It means that while your mother couldn't bring you to life on a higher starting point, your latent potential is deeper than others. Your physique is more adaptable and your soul can endure greater stresses and changes without breaking. This is her greatest gift to you. You were indistinguishable from baseline humans when you were born, but you do not have to stay that way for the rest of your

life. If you ever decided to follow in her footsteps or yearn to attain greater personal power in another capacity, you will not experience as many insurmountable obstacles as other modern humans. As a child of our mother, ascension is not a path to regaining the power of your distant ancestors. It is a journey of rightfully claiming the power that should have belonged to you but has been withheld due to the realities of the time. This is your birthright, Ves."

Ves became shocked by what he heard.

He never knew that his mother had so many deep considerations towards her son.

It made him feel warm and loved. He could feel the care that she had given him even to this day!

Chapter 4788 Identity Confusion

What was his birthright?

Was it to gain the power of a primordial human and inherit the power and knowledge of his mother?

That did not appear to be the case. His mother had never told him about any of her extraordinary history back when she was originally alive.

She never left any clues when she died and did not set any expectations on Ves either.

If Cynthia Larkinson had her way, her son would have grown up as an ordinary third-class citizen of a fairly normal third-rate state that was far removed from the dangerous power plays and galactic developments that made the galactic heartland and the galactic center so treacherous.

The answer he gained from his eldest sister made him more confused. His mother injected him with as much potential as she could manage, but never imparted any expectations for him. This was another contradiction that troubled Ves.

Though a part of him felt proud for being born to a once-powerful parent whose lineage was more nobler than others, what was the use of all of this if his mother just wanted him to live his life as an ordinary Brighter?

It was not until his father broke the game by passing on the Mech Designer System that Ves truly started making use of the deep but buried potential in his body and spirit.

His sister, whose birth and upbringing was much higher than Ves had enjoyed, felt sympathy for her poor brother.

"I am different from you, Ves. I was born to fight and assist our mother in her struggles from the day I was born." She told him. "You were born in a time where our mother had reached the weakest phase of her life. Not even she can maintain her confidence and optimism towards the future. She brought you to life because she wanted her life to have meaning and leave behind a legacy that would live on after her passing. She did not expect to return to life in her current form. It is only through a number of accidents and coincidences that you were able to sustain her and allow her to regain much of her strength."

That may be true, but Ves was not entirely sure about whether all of it had been accidents and coincidences.

He felt that a lot of different decisions he made back then may have been engineered to produce a specific outcome that led to the current circumstances.

Perhaps his mother couldn't resist the urge to fall back into old habits and implement a scheme that might ultimately bring her back to life.

Perhaps the Mech Designer System remained attached to its original holder and sought to use her son to reverse her death.

It could also be that everything that led Ves to getting reintroduced to her and giving her the means to claw herself back from total nihilism was simply an unintended consequence of bearing a child. Maybe she suffered so much throughout her first life that karma finally played a role and compensated her for all of the good she had done.

Ves shook his head. He was speculating again. He did not have all of the answers, and he had a feeling that he might never learn the full truth.

"Helena?"

"What is it now?" She asked as she conveyed a touch of impatience.

"My mother once told me that she sabotaged my ability to pilot a mech." He said. "Leaving aside whether she knew that I would be able to pilot a mech in the future or not, what is the reason for doing so? Don't misunderstand me. I am not upset with what she has done. I might have thought differently if I was younger, but I am old enough and happy enough in my current career that I would not wish to trade my mech designs to become a simple soldier who only knows how to kill."

"I am not entirely clear about this matter, Ves. My mother doesn't tell me anything. Even if I knew, I would still withhold my answer from you. This is a matter that you deserve to hear from her directly. Maybe if you come back to the old galaxy and hand over David's skeleton to her in person, she may finally answer all of the questions that have caused you to become so confused. You are right in that you have grown older and mature now. You have embraced your vocation as a mech designer and you are no longer easily tempted by alternative possibilities. I think our mother will be much more inclined to tell you the truth about her past self and the reason why her problems affect you as well."

It became more and more imperative for Ves to return to the Nyxian Gap.

"Fine." Ves accepted her words as a plan came to mind. "I will return to the old galaxy, but as you know I really can't do so casually. I don't even know whether it is possible for me to leave within a decade. Aside from that, the Milky Way is also extremely dangerous to me for reasons that you are already familiar with.

"We can figure this out together." His sister replied in an optimistic tone. "You do not have to bear this burden together. Our Oblivion Empire has grown considerably over the years. We have not only mastered many technologies, but also attracted many talents under our banner. We will find a way to resolve the issues that you are worrying about one way or another."

"Alright. Let us leave this matter for another day."

The pair of siblings continued to wait in the recreation and socialization hall for all of the captive humans to arrive.

If the time-keeping system of the prison facility hadn't malfunctioned, Ves knew that the large and expansive room would become a lot more crowded in less than four minutes!

He began to straighten his back and adjust his demeanor in anticipation of facing a tough crowd.

He did not want to leave anything to chance. Ves needed to take charge of the entire crowd so that no one stupid would get to make idiotic decisions and ruin this chance of escaping the prison facility without suffering excessive casualties.

His mind still wasn't fully in the present, though. A part of his mentality still remained in flux due to all of the knowledge he learned today about primordial humans, his mother and himself.

"I suggest you don't think too much about your heritage." The spiritual entity advised. "No matter the circumstances of your birth, none of the advantages imparted by your parents has allowed you to build a business empire and a clan with ease. The worst primordial human is far inferior to your current self, and you have the chance to become much more powerful as long as you keep working harder. No matter whether you were born as a lesser or greater human, it is our mentalities and our accomplishments that truly make us great."

"You... are right." Ves sighed.

The past was the past. Ves couldn't change anything about it. Whether he learned the truth about his heritage or not did not matter that much to him. He did not inherit his mother's profession but instead became a man of the current times. Mechs dominated his life today, and that was what he should be focusing upon.

He yearned to return back to his stronghold so that he could go back to designing mechs again. The Dullahan Project and the Ghost Project were both screaming to be completed, and he was determined to finish them by the time the refitted and upgraded Spirit of Bentheim returned from an MTA shipyard!

Helena perked up for a moment. "The air is changing."

Ves nodded. He activated a command built into his Unending Regalia and caused it to project a glowing cape behind his armored back.

Although the false cape was not that particularly impressive in itself, it could play a major role in enhancing his stature as long as the rest of the package exuded enough strength.

Ves was incredibly confident in this aspect of himself. This was not his first rodeo and he had specifically designed his Unending Regalia to convey the look of a martial leader.

Nothing about his appearance looked anything close to a nerdy mech designer!

A few more seconds passed by as Ves could feel the spatial fluctuations in the air before him. It was as if hundreds of buzzers went off at once.

The teleportation mechanisms were in a worse shape than Ves realized. A lot of phasewater had decayed, causing the devices responsible for bringing inmates in and out of their cells to struggle to perform their tasks!

Fortunately, there were many of them, so the prison facility could always rely on an ample amount of redundancies to complete these exhausting jobs.

The air crackled a bit as the sudden appearance of over a thousand different bodies appeared at once!

"Where are we?!"

"My comm still can't connect to the emergency services!"

"Hey, were you captured as well?"

"Troopers, fall back on my position!"

"Be on guard and investigate our surroundings!"

"Surrender your combat armor and your weapon this instant! President Yenames Clive will not be happy if all of you if I have taken a laser round through my head. Protecting my life should be your highest priority!"

"Waaaaah! I want to go home, mommy!"

The cacophony was loud and overbearing. People were screaming, crying and issuing demands at the same time.

Though there were a number of obvious leader figures who attempted to take charge of their own bodyguards as well as the large number of Davutan security guards, even they could not impose their order on the crowd.

Ves did not look particularly surprised. He knew people well enough by now that he predicted that everyone would get messy.

Of the few people who managed to keep their cool, the Larkinson delegation clearly stood out. They had received plenty of warnings and instructions in advance and had immediately moved to separate themselves from the crowd so that they could all group up at their patriarch's position.

As the civilian Larkinsons retreated behind Ves while his honor guards stood in a neat and straight row before him, he finally decided to put an end to this farce.

With Helena, his wife, his children and the rest of the leaders of the Larkinson Clan paying close attention to him, Ves raised his fist and spread out his own glow, causing it to impact the minds of all of the scattered people who were squabbling among themselves!

"QUIET!" He boomed, making sure to amplify his voice by using his Unending Regalia!

His voice immediately caused everyone else to grow quiet. They could not help it as the sight that Ves and his Larkinsons made combined with the glow that he exuded from his body truly made a strong impact on the scattered people.

Not even the well-trained and numerous security guards working for the Davutan state exuded as much strength and unity at the moment!

Though a number of people kept moving or talking among themselves, this was already an excellent outcome.

"Let me introduce myself to you. I am Patriarch Ves Larkinson, the founder and leader of the Larkinson Clan. If you people have not been living under a rock all this time, then you should know who I am and the enemies that I have beaten together with my people. You may not have guessed it, but I am the reason why you have been teleported out of your cells just now. If I hadn't been able to

escape my cell, locate a damaged alien control center and repaired it just enough to get you all out, you would still be growing hungry and thirsty in your cramped cages. I have brought you this far. Now I ask you to follow my lead and help me bring you out of this sordid alien prison. ARE YOU WITH ME, DAVUTANS?!"

Chapter 4789 Commanding Lead

"Who put you in charge?!" A mercenary general asked.

The uniformed man possessed a brave demeanor and did not look inferior to a Larkinson. The people who got kidnapped largely consisted of highly successful leaders in every important profession. The Larkinsons were not the only ones who brought soldiers, and it could even be argued that mercenary organizations possessed even more fighting experience!

This gave the mercenary general the confidence to contest for dominance. It was not that the man doubted the combat acumen of the Larkinsons, but his mercenary organization possessed a martial tradition that went back centuries!

Ves recalled that the man came from a notable mercenary organization called the TRD Combat Application Group.

"General Holdren. I have heard much about you and your fellow mercenaries. I respect your mercenary company's competence in battles against mechs on the battlefield, but we are in a different situation right now. The scenario we are in is more comparable to the expeditions that our clan has embarked upon in the past. In this alien environment where we are tasked with fighting an asymmetrical battle with inconsistent battle assets, ingenuity and technological mastery are more important than knowing how to fight. Besides, you and your fellow mercenary officers have come without bringing any combat armor or heavy weapons."

"We have our guards!"

"That may be true, but are they as well-equipped as ours?" Ves asked with a grin.

He decided that a demonstration was in order. He waved for his honor guards to step forward. They did so with loud clanking metal footsteps that echoed throughout the large and expansive hall. Each of them looked large and looming as they wore serious medium to heavy combat armor that were geared towards assault, defense and other heavy duties.

The more knowledgeable and technical people among the crowd looked astonished as they understood how well the Larkinson Clan's honor guards were armored!

"Those troops are wrapped in first-class armor plating!" A Senior Mech Designer working for another company revealed. "The workmanship is rough, but their effectiveness is not in question."

"Seriously?!"

"How extravagant!"

"Even the patriarch is clad in the same quality of armor!"

Ves grinned as he faced the crowd in an open helmet. He waved one of his honor guards at the side to step forward and face the massive crowd in a confident posture.

"If you doubt the capabilities of my soldiers and think that our clan should not take the lead, then feel free to defeat him. Shoot his armor. I dare you. If you want to challenge my right to take command, then prove you have the strength to beat my clan into submission!"

Not many dared to do so. The Larkinson Clan's heritage may only be a fraction of the other organizations involved in this mess, but the glory and prestige that Ves and his soldiers had earned in a short amount of time was unequalled!

While these mercenaries and other pioneers had been wining and dining in the safe and

increasingly more secure confines of Davute, the Larkinsons either went on harrowing expeditions

or spent time on preparing for their next journey into the deeper parts of the frontier!

Reputation mattered in times like these. Ves had hardly heard General Holdren and his mercenary

company's deeds, while practically every well-connected Davute knew about the Larkinson Clan's

record of beating mutant phase whales and formidable alien warships!

Ves banged his armored fist against his chestplate, producing a loud noise that caused the timid

individuals amongst the crowd to jump in fright!

"Do you know where I gained the materials to upgrade the armor of my suit and that of my

bodyguards? Our clan ripped all of the materials off the damaged and broken debris from an alien

warship whose name roughly translates to the Collapsing House of the Fractured Star. Our Golden

Skull Alliance not only had to confront this ship in direct battle, but also had to fend off her

mightiest leader and protector, a phase lord called the Trampler of Stars. If you think those names

are exaggerations to embellish my record, then I can send you the edited footage of our battle

against these powerful alien foes."

"...No need."

The words that Ves spoke combined with his odd glow that transmitted his will to dominate to the

crowd completely caused them to fall under his rhythm.

They never encountered a situation like this before!

Many people did not even harbor any desire to challenge what Ves was saying.

They already became

convinced that it was right for this impressive clan patriarch to take charge of their entire group!

Of course, not everyone was caught off-balance. There were still many experienced and steady

leaders among the kidnapped VIPs. Their ability to endure pressure and think

rationality were exceptional, and they did not let themselves get fooled by a younger man who happened to take the initiative.

General Holdren of the TRD Combat Application Group looked unwilling, but he knew quite well that he and his mercenaries would not be able to surpass the Larkinsons in terms of strength or proven accomplishments. This caused him to withhold his voice and remain still. That did not necessarily mean that people like General Holdren were sincerely convinced and willing to obey the instructions of the Larkinsons.

If severe differences in opinions ever arose, the mercenaries working for TRD might decide to separate from the Larkinsons and act in a separate capacity! That was an undesirable outcome to Ves as he anticipated that there would be a tough fight ahead.

Whoever managed to take over the primary control room should definitely have prepared enough defenses to defend against an attack.

In the worser scenarios, the adversaries might have managed to subvert a few native defensive systems as well, which meant that the trapped VIPs had to fight against both their kidnappers and the prison facility itself!

Ves needed every soldier who could fight in order to maximize his chances of winning the upcoming confrontation. He did not want to worry about people messing up behind his back or throwing his strategy into disarray.

Fortunately, the different delegations were quite limited and scattered in their opinions. Even if

there were a number of them that were united in their unwillingness to answer to an upstart clan

and its young leader, they were even less willing to answer to each other!

Ves knew that he needed to make a breakthrough in order to unite the gathered VIPs and their guards under his banner.

While Ves had been arguing with the likes of General Holdren, a large number of

soldiers wearing
either low profile suits or heavily armored combat armor had gathered and
formed up in the rear of
the main crowd.

As the groups of soldiers began to organize themselves until they formed a
much larger column of
infantry troops, a lot of people discovered that a second powerful force was in
their midst!

The Davutan security guards might not have the benefit of extravagant
protection such as first-class
armor plating, but they possessed the greatest quantity of combat effective
soldiers among the
people involuntarily brought to this pocket space.

The hundreds of guards were not only well-trained, but already adhered to a
single military
command structure. If the equipment between the Larkinson guards and the
Davutan guards was
the same, then the latter would undoubtedly be able to gain an easy advantage
in battle due to their
overwhelming numerical superiority!

Ves needed the support of these soldiers, but how easy was it to convince them
to answer to a
private individual?

Each of them had been trained to answer to their superiors and no one else. As
consummate
professionals, they took their oaths seriously. It was impossible for Ves to
deceive them with words

and convince them to ignore the regulations they were compelled to follow.
In truth, his entire show of force was not targeted towards the crowd as a whole.

Ves was confident
in his speaking ability, and if that did not work out for whatever reason, he could
always resort to
absolute force to cow the doubters and contrarians into submission.

His actual goal was to win over the highest ranking officer among the Davutan
guards.

Right now, that figure slowly stepped forward while having all of his troopers
form to his rear and
sides.

It became obvious that the guard officer had successfully managed to subdue
the different guard

units that had originally been stationed across different seating blocks.

"Your name?" Ves asked as if he was a lord demanding the identity of a subordinate.

"Major Alden Durant. I have taken command of the Davutan Palace Guard Forces that are trapped in this alien base."

"You have listened to my words like the others. Do you agree with my argument and agree to follow my orders?"

"Respectfully, patriarch, I cannot do that." The guard officer shook his head. "Our soldiers have a duty to guard you and our other honored citizens of our colonial state. We are not allowed to take sides or let ourselves be commanded by one group to the detriment of other groups. The command of our guard forces must always remain in the hands of an officer that is commissioned by our state. If your relative General Ark Larkinson was here, then we would surrender to his authority without any doubt, but you are not an officer of our state."

Seeing that Major Durant could not easily be persuaded, Ves made a judgment call and decided to take a step back.

"Very well." Ves smiled in a charming fashion while subconsciously increasing the strength of his glow. "Since you and your men are loyal servants of the state who can be trusted to do what is best, then I will not ask you to betray your oath and put my orders above your duty. I merely wish to obtain your cooperation in a breakout attempt that I have planned."

Chapter 4790 Major Alden Durant

The sudden teleportation of so many different humans to the recreation and socialization area of the prison base had finally lifted a heavy weight off their hearts!

"Ves actually did it." Gloriana blinked as she still couldn't quite believe that her husband managed to access the alien control system to such a thorough degree that he could release every captive human from their cells. "I knew I married the right mech designer."

"Papa is so strong!" Marvaine cheered as he jumped and ran as if he hadn't been spending several boring hours in a cell. "I want to be just like him when I am older!"

His mother frowned and picked him up to prevent him from wasting any needless energy. "Hush now, baby. Your father isn't an entirely good role model for a mech designer. Your mama is just as good of a mech designer. Spend more time with me and I will teach you how to design more flawless and perfect Mekanos. Does that sound fun to you, my son?"

"I want that, mama, but only papa can teach me how to escape from prison and subvert an alien prison! I want to learn from him as well!"

"You shouldn't have to learn these lessons at all, Marvaine!"

As Gloriana, Marvaine and many other people enjoyed their slightly greater freedom and began to feel more optimistic about their chances of making it out, a much more serious discussion was about to take place.

A group of important soldiers and officials quickly gathered in order to plan an assault on an unfamiliar position under adverse circumstances.

This was not a normal military operation. Nobody among the crowd knew what they were getting into, so it became imperative to hash out as much as possible in the little time they had left!

Major Alden Durant brought over a dozen different guard captains to the impromptu council.

Meanwhile, Ves summoned General Verle, Ketis, Chief Minister Abigail Even, Chief Minister Magdalena Larkinson, Director Ranya Wodin, Nitaa and anyone else that might offer enough useful input.

All of the gathered officers and officials looked grim-faced and serious.

No matter whether they wore full combat armor or a ceremonial suit that offered little protection except against the slightly toxic alien air, none of them believed it would be that easy to overcome the adversaries that had managed to circumvent discovery and managed to capture so many Davutan VIPs in a single instant!

The only exception among them was Ketis. Having spent several hours in a situation where she was not only trapped, but also deprived of her Bloodsinger, the most combat capable mech designer among the entire gathering of captives had been experiencing pure torture in the last few hours.

It was only after she was able to meet up with the honor guards of the Larkinson Clan that she finally managed to obtain a decent blade by her standards!

"You might not be my possession, but I still remember how I made you with my own hands. You will sing just fine in my grasp." The swordmaster smiled as she patted the flat of her one-handed transphasic sword.

She forged the weapon years ago during the times when the clan resided in Davute for several years. She took part in the comprehensive upgrade project that aimed to bring up the equipment standards of the Larkinson Clan's honor guard to the highest standards achievable in the Red Ocean.

Though her usage of phasewater was rough and experimental, she forged a batch of swords and sent the best ones among them to the honor guards that were skilled enough to make effective use of the powerful weapons.

Although the blade was not attuned to her, Sharpie was already at work at trying to align it with her own style and strengths.

By the time hostilities commenced, Ketis hoped to be able to slice through whatever enemies prevented her and her family from returning to the clan!

"You will need a suit of combat armor as well." Ves remarked just before the general discussion started. "One of my honor guards should have one that should roughly fit your dimensions."

The swordmaster paused in her admiration of her new sword to shake her head. "Don't bother. You designed their suits of combat armor to fit their dimensions and fighting styles to an exact degree. It will do more harm than good if I force myself to fight in a shell that actively works against my movements."

"How are you supposed to fight, then? Will you just let your shield generator tank all of the blows while you go off running around in a ceremonial outfit?"

"Don't be silly, Ves. I plan to approach one of the many Davutan security guards and ask if I can borrow her combat armor. The gear used by those troopers might not be as tough as your recent work, but they will complement my fighting style better as they are designed to be versatile and widely applicable."

He understood her logic. The honor guards all received the benefit of customized gear, while the guard forces working for the state mostly had to make do with standard-issue gear.

It shouldn't matter whether Ketis was not a soldier of the state. She was a bona fide transcendent swordswoman and probably possessed the single highest combat power out of every infantry trooper in this prison facility!

"I can see how that works, but you will be operating on a thin margin." Ves responded. "You can't afford to make as many mistakes and any weapon that is as powerful as that of a mech can blast you to pieces, swordmaster or not. There is a reason why your profession has declined in modern times."

"You don't need to remind me of that, Ves. My intuition is strong so I will know when I am being targeted. I won't foolishly storm ahead and attract everyone's attention. I will act according to my judgment."

He did not express any further concerns as it was completely unnecessary. Ketis was not a kid. Battles like these were hard to come by and she was in the right position to make a difference. The lives of her children were on the line and that made it impossible for her to sit back and rely on the protection of their guards!

Ves respected her desire to put her life on the line in order to seek greater heights in the field of traditional swordsmanship.

Both Ves and Ketis soon joined the circle of leaders.

No one understood their current circumstances better than Ves, and that made it important for them to hear what he had to say.

Ves did not hold back too much in sharing his discoveries. He projected an annotated map of the prison facility and explained a summary of what he learned up to this point.

Both Larkinsons and outsiders looked shocked and concerned at different junctions. Compared to the captured VIPs who had only been here for a few hours, the enemy had spent a lot more time in this ancient alien facility!

"Our adversaries have too many advantages." Major Alden Durant spoke with concern. "They have demonstrated at least a partial degree of control over the automated systems of this abandoned ruin, and they have spent much more time entrenching their positions at the upper floors. Depending on the nature of our foes, we may be facing strong crew-served weapons, fixed defenses and even outright combat vehicles such as infantry fighting vehicles, tanks and maybe even mechs!"

The senior security guard officer was right to be concerned. His forces may have been well-equipped for their specific responsibilities, but their responsibilities were mainly confined to crowd control and solving infantry-level threats.

Anything heavier required the intervention of the mechs on patrol duty. The infantry troopers were never expected to confront hostile vehicles on their own. They instead had to obey directives which obliged them to escort their charges to safety!

General Verle turned to the Davutan major. "How many effective troops can you call upon and how many of them are equipped with heavy armaments?"

"According to our current count, we can muster over 120 unarmored security guards and 300 armored infantry soldiers." Major Durant responded. "All of them are in good condition and most still have ample reserves of energy and ammunition. Our unarmored troops are not suited for assaults. I prefer to keep them close and have them watch over our noncombatants. Our armored troops possess ample military training and can be relied upon to fight both offensive and defensive battles. However, there is not much variety to their combat equipment. Only 9 of my specialists are equipped with heavy weapons, and even then their ammunition reserves are limited."

The seating blocks already possessed fixed defensive hardpoints that already covered this need. There was not much of a demand to bring in additional heavy weapon specialists for that reason.

The fact that the group of security guards included 9 heavy weapon specialists was already remarkable by themselves.

When Ves and the others took a closer look at the heavy weapons carried by these bulkier and more formidable looking troops, they became slightly disappointed.

"Seven missile launchers and two laser cannons." General Verle summarized. "Both are transphasic and can pack a substantial punch. The former can be programmed to follow complicated trajectories and they are also geared towards punching through armor and energy shields. The latter can only be fired in a straight trajectory, but can fire repeatedly as long as the energy supply lasts and the heat buildup is not excessive."

Ves shook his head. "We can only use them sparingly. The troopers don't carry that many spare missiles so these launchers will quickly turn useless once they have fired a couple of times. The laser cannons are powerful, but they are undersized. Although we can string enough spare batteries from multiple sources in order to fire them a few more times, their heat capacities are too low, and that puts a limit on how many times we can fire them in a single engagement."

The group concluded that they needed to make sparing use of the few heavy weapons available. They should only truly be reserved for threats that could not be solved by regular soldiers.

Once they gained a greater understanding of their assets, they soon turned to formulating a strategy and planning their approach to the upper floors.

"There are clearly multiple approaches to the top." General Verle pointed at the different pathways. "However, we do not have reliable and verified information on how well they are defended. On top of that, we still do not know what we are facing. Scouting should be our first priority. We must gather first-hand information on the state of these approaches before we should commit to an assault."

"That will give our adversaries more time to prepare." Major Durant spoke with a heavy voice. "Aside from that, it is impossible for us to take competent and well-prepared opponents by surprise. In a cramped facility like this where it is impossible for us to breach the walls or circumvent their defensive lines, our only choice is to attack with force. We must carefully determine how extensively we split our forces and apply pressure in multiple directions at once."

If they stuck together, then it would be easy for their enemies to defend from a single direction or use overwhelming firepower to wipe out all of the attackers at once.

If they split up too much, then it would not only be challenging to coordinate all of the groups, but there would also be a greater risk of getting defeated in detail!

No matter what, the people who gathered here had to make a lot of hard choices!

Another problem was the soldiers hailing from the other groups. They amounted to hundreds of additional armored troops, and could play a huge role in any fight.

However, they could only provide a lot of value in the field if they cooperated sincerely. If they slacked off or retreated too soon, then many other units would definitely get in trouble!