

## The Mech 4821

### Chapter 4821 All Powerful

The more Ketis utilized her newfound might, the harder it became to resist the allure of heaven.

She keenly fell in love with the versatility and pliability of heavenly energy.

Although its ability to hold an edge was decidedly mediocre, this powerful form of transcendent energy could do so much else that it was hard not to take advantage of such potential.

Her impression of the Heavensword also changed a lot as a result.

It became less of a sword and more of a magic wand in her eyes.

It could become as hot as plasma or as cold as a rogue planet.

It could strike a nearby foe with enormous power or assassinate a target on the other side of a planet.

It could speed up time or slow it down.

It could teleport vast distances or lock down an area to prevent anyone from employing the same ability.

It even claimed that it could resurrect the dead!

The list of what it could theoretically do exceeded the list of what it couldn't do! It was so damn omnipotent that Ketis could easily get lost in all of the possibilities.

It was a pity that Ketis was the wrong kind of sword practitioner to wield such an infinite blade.

She learned from the ancient relic that one of the requirements she had to meet was to imprint the image of heaven in her mind and infuse it with her willpower.

This act of visualization would steadily allow her to manifest a small piece of heaven in her deepest self!

By orienting her entire being towards heaven, she could artificially influence her development to the point where she might truly become a proper inheritor of the Heavensword!

The advantages this bestowed were too many to count. So long as Ketis developed the right 'artistic conception' or whatever that meant, she could not only understand what heaven was all about, but make proper use of the greater and more advanced possibilities of the Heavensword!

Ketis never gave in to the temptation. No matter how attractive it may be to take the Heavensword as her own, she was a mech designer as well as a swordmaster.

She much preferred to forge and utilize her own grand work weapon. If she had the power to do so, she would definitely rely on her own work as opposed to a sword created by a long-dead smith.

Besides, switching to become a successor of the Heavensword came with a lot of irreversible changes. Ketis gained a premonition that accepting transformation would cause her to lose Sharpie in its current form.

That was unacceptable to Ketis!

"Heaven sounds like a nice place, but... I am too attached to this reality to yearn for a different one."

As such, the Heavensword only had a limited ability to pull off all of those feats without her support, and even then it only gave her a small taste of how it could affect reality.

For example, when the pescans sneakily transported a large missile carrier from the upper floor and made it fire its full salvo of transphasic siege missiles, Ketis only swung her weapon a single time to capture all of the threatening warheads in a zone where time progressed a hundred times slower!

If Ketis had decided to intercept these heavy missiles by cutting them with a vibrating sword attack, then she could not guarantee that their exaggeratingly powerful warheads would explode prematurely.

That would have been devastating to both the humans and the pescans on this floor!

A lot more pescans would have died as a result, but Ketis could not accept the loss of any further human life!

She swung her sword yet again.

This time, the missiles that the aliens originally designed to break through the defenses of another city-state regained their normal speeds.

The difference was that they flew in the opposite direction!

The missiles flew so fast that the pescans barely had time to realize the danger heading in their direction.

"Reeeeiiaaa—"

BOOOOOOMBBOOOOOOMBBOOOOOOMBBOOOOOOMB!

Deafening sounds of explosions engulfed the already ruined floor as the missiles not only destroyed their carrier, but also everything else in a wide spread!

If not for the fact that the missiles were configured for penetrating walls and energy shields rather than destroying as many structures as possible, the entire floor would have turned into an explosive furnace by this time!

Even so, the shockwaves produced by the continuous explosions were so violent that they threatened to push all of the humans on this floor off their feet and slam them against the walls!

Ketis hastily swung the Heavensword once again. A large force field sprung to life that did not entirely negate the strong concussive forces, but managed to weaken them to the point where they only gave people a moderate push.

If her previous attacks had already slain over a thousand pescans and destroyed much of the cohesion and combat effectiveness of the defending side, then what had just taken place completely destroyed ability to resist!

The transphasic siege missiles had done their job and blown out large chunks of transphasic stone from the floor and walls.

Unfortunately, their indiscriminate power had done more harm to the pescans than the humans.

Every single alien combatant and structure on the side where the missiles originally came from had been devastated!

Nothing was left intact on the other side. The destruction was so utterly thorough and complete that it looked like the aftermath of a warzone.

The floor had been conquered at this point.

Though many hundreds of pescans still managed to survive the simultaneous explosions due to the size of this floor, they had all lost their confidence in this battle.

Their morale had hit rock bottom when they all witnessed the varied means of the 'human goddess'.

From their perspective, Ketis had been toying with them from the beginning!

Against an opponent that could power up to a massive degree and display many different abilities that had little to do with each other, these humble planet-bound aliens could not even muster the will to lift their arm cannons anymore.

"Reeaiiaee..."

"Lkoowwwa..."

The aliens either wailed or said their goodbyes. Even the most elite soldiers had become broken after they realized how futile it was for them to resist.

Although Ketis wanted to wipe them all out with a few more strikes from her borrowed sword, she had already expended a lot of power.

Her time with the Heavensword was slowly coming to an end!

Rather than waste her time on defeating these dregs, Ketis wanted to eliminate the threats that could still threaten her family and clansmen after she had lost her power.

She gazed upwards. Her eyes seemed to penetrate through tens of meters of thick transphasic stone.

The next floor happened to be the highest one. It was smaller than the other ones and did not hold that many pescans.

The aliens stationed in the highest floor still possessed a decent amount of combat power, but their numbers were no longer as overwhelming as before.

She had much greater concerns to worry about.

The most lethal threat had never been the pescans.

Her gaze turned downwards.

She hadn't noticed it at the start, but the enhanced senses and perception granted by the Heavensword allowed her to detect a huge threat waking up from an awfully long slumber.

Ketis could sense that the central prison cell used to be the most secure one in the entire facility, but all of its security measures were steadily being retracted.

This granted the formerly dormant phase whale the opportunity to restore more and more of his power.

If the phase whale managed to get free from his restraints as well as his confining prison, then Ketis believed she stood no chance in defeating this creature.

This was after she had factored in the help provided by the Heavensword!

"It is a good thing that it hasn't fully woken up as of yet." Ketis grinned as she started to see the prisoner in the central cell as her latest prey. "I wouldn't think about touching you if you are in your prime, but now that you are still partially restrained, you are no different from a fish on the chopping block!"

Of course, a big fish on a chopping block was not so easily cut, but Ketis still possessed a lot of confidence in her Heavensword!

Besides, the Heavensword hungered to test its blade against this foreign alien powerhouse.

It happened before she could even formulate her thoughts.

In one moment, she was floating in the air like a heavenly goddess coming down to bring judgment to the aliens.

In another moment, she had teleported straight through all of the transphasic stone and appeared in the middle of a dark and enormous chamber!

The dim lighting of the jumbo-sized prison cell barely lit up the only occupant that had remained trapped in this place for so long.

The sudden appearance of Ketis and her glowing white blade inserted an explosion of light in this forgotten cell!

Just as the Larkinsons and many others suspected, the prison facility had never been completely emptied.

Its last occupants may have evacuated the entire facility, but they left behind the largest, strongest and most formidable native god for reasons no one could explain!

There was no question that the prisoner was a phase whale.

The aquatic creature was hundreds of meters long and possessed a pale gray hide that looked dry and leathery due to all of the moisture that it had lost over the ages.

One of the restraints that kept him in place all of this time were massive chains that had been shackled to his flesh and bones. They extended from reinforced enclosures built into the surrounding walls and maintained so much tension that the whale could not even move from the middle of the cell!

Made out of unknown transphasic alloys, their toughness and resistance against spatial effects were the highest that Ketis had ever seen!

Not all of the chains held the ancient prisoner anymore.

Ketis could see that while every chain remained attached to the whale, their connections to the walls of the prison had been severed only recently.

It turned out that whatever the pescans had done in the control room at the top allowed them to activate a gradual liberation process!

Ketis could sense that even now, a mechanism hidden behind the thick and reinforced transphasic walls was in the process of severing another thick chain!

After briefly studying the restrains, she studied the phase whale itself.

Compared to the ones the Larkinsons encountered before, this one looked a lot cleaner and less evil.

The ancient phase whale was not an unclean whale and did not transplant a lot of tentacles across his body to make it easier for him to grapple his enormous prey.

Despite not showing any signs that he has given in to cannibalism, the phase whale looked anything but gentle!

The creature's eyes were half-closed and only partially awake. It took an immeasurable amount of time and energy to rouse a phase whale from hibernation.

After all, it was incredible for a creature as large, massive and dense as this to be able to cling to life for thousands of years!

Only a part of the massive creature's brain had awoken by this time. The creature's massive eyes did not stare up at her, but she could feel the instincts of the phase whale's body responding to her intrusion.

Hostility immediately radiated from the massive whale!

The entire fabric of space in the chamber began to solidify as the whale's phasewater organs began to turn the immediate area into a spatial quagmire.

Normally, this should have immobilized anyone aside from powerful enough native gods.

Ketis would have become frozen in space as well if she was present in a normal capacity.

"Heaven shall never be denied!"

The powerful weapon easily shattered the solidification effect around it and completely negated half-dormant whale's efforts!

Chapter 4822 Energetic Infiltration

"HHUURHGHGUUUGGGGG..."

The phase whale did not so much speak as convey a dreamy concept.

Ketis had no idea what the whale conveyed to her. All she wanted was to get rid of this threat before he could break apart the entire prison and endanger everyone trapped inside!

"I am not interested in your mewling, filthy alien." She sneered.

Conscious or not, the phase whale's emotional reaction to her and everyone else was marked with clear contempt and hostility.

Phase whales had a well-deserved reputation for being arrogant, and this captive monstrosity was no exception to this rule!

It was hard for giant organisms to treat smaller ones as their equals. Ketis was but one of many ants in the enormous eyes of the old and half-dormant whale.

Even though Ketis wielded a relic weapon that surpassed any technology that the phase whale had ever had ever seen, it was a pity that his perspective was too narrow.

The whale was unable to sense the full magnitude of what he was challenging! He was only able to observe a small portion of the incredible power that the weapon contained within its sacred vessel

The Heavensword took affront to the phase whale's dismissal. The weapon vibrated harder in Ketis' grip, causing it to generate a louder and more ominous buzzing sound that echoed across the large chamber.

Seeing that the phase whale continued to wake his slumbering organs and muster up more power, Ketis did not delay any longer!

Her entire body blazed with light and heavenly energy before it propelled forward like a rocket!

Though she was not able to execute any of her regular techniques with the Heavensword, she exerted the power of vibration in the strongest possible form.

As she charged forward, she thrust out the Heavensword and focused all of her will into punching through whatever obstacle she might encounter!

BANG!

It was as if she had collided against a planet!

A spatial barrier had flared to life as the tip of the Heavensword abruptly failed to press forward!

Ketis' body would have been squashed into pieces if not for the weapon reinforcing her body against the recoil of this collision!

Even though the potent heavenly energy and the vibration effect acting upon it allowed the Heavensword to slowly squeeze through the spatial barrier, its progress had slowed down enormously.

Ketis and the Heavensword had to exert a huge amount of effort to progress centimeter by centimeter.

It was already remarkable that they could get any further!

The vast majority of enemies never had a chance of breaking the spatial barrier, let alone cut through its higher-dimensional reinforcement at such a consistent pace!

"PUSH!"

Ketis could do little to help the Heavensword pierce through the phase whale's main line of defense, but she tried her best to conceptualize how the ancient weapon could punch through these defenses more effectively.

The Heavensword did not need her help. Its abilities and measures were far superior to anything that she could ever muster by herself!

As the Heavensword penetrated deeper and deeper through the spatial barrier, the phase whale began to experience more strain.

The half-dormant monster's phasewater organs were far from their prime!

If the captive whale had been in his prime condition, then it would have been able to leverage a lot more power against Ketis and the Heavensword!

However, his capture and extremely lengthy imprisonment had clearly taken a toll on the phase whale.

The quantity of phasewater contained in his body had been severely depleted as well, which left the creature with much less power at his disposal than normal.

This ultimately allowed the Heavensword to break through the spatial barrier that many others could never break!

The shattering of the spatial barrier did not produce any noises as it was not a physical object to begin with. However, its passing granted Ketis and the Heavensword a clear path towards the enormous body of the phase whale!

A part of Ketis briefly wondered whether it was possible for a human-sized weapon as small as the Heavensword could inflict effective damage against a phase whale whose body had grown as large as a starship, but she did not hold these thoughts much further.

Since the Heavensword exuded an enormous degree of confidence and certainty, Ketis put her entire faith in the artifact and eventually managed to stab it into the dry folds of skin and fat on the top of the creature's head!

The sword sank into the ancient flesh to the hilt before stopping.

Again, Ketis had been forced to stop once again.

She did not expect this to happen. She was certain that the Heavensword would cut through all of the skin, blubber, flesh and bone until it had drilled straight into the brains and cut the life of the most dangerous organism in the Davute System.

Instead, the sword had abruptly shaken off the desire to cut through the whale's organic matter and instead leveraged its considerable heavenly energy in a different manner.

The divergent fluctuations threw Ketis so off-guard that they broke her concentration.

"Wait... what are you doing, Heavensword?!"

The willful actions of the ancient relic weapon reminded Ketis once again that she never truly controlled the weapon in the first place.

It had only played along with her when it suited its needs!

Now that it had come into contact with an old, powerful but incredibly weakened phase whale, it suddenly unveiled a different set of motives!

The sword leveraged more heavenly energy than ever and began to pour it into the phase whale through the contact it had just made!

The sword no longer functioned as a weapon, but instead turned into a tiny needle that injected foreign energy into the phase whale!

"GHHHUURRAAAAAAAA!"

The intrusion jolted the phase whale to such a degree that he woke up at a faster pace!

However, any attempts to dislodge the powerful sword from his body failed because the Heavensword had already infiltrated his organic systems!

The ancient weapon seemed to understand the biology and functioning of the amazingly complicated phase whale body. Its energy sank deeper and split up into many different tendrils that immediately began to freeze important organs, sever crucial nerves and squeeze out phasewater from organic tissue.

Although the phase whale's enormous body possessed a lot of internal defensive measures, none of them were capable of affecting a sabotaging influence that was largely immaterial and could not be touched or killed with transphasic attacks.

"HUUUGHHEHEHUUUA...!"

The whale resorted to a more physical means of resistance. His gigantic body buckled and rolled as if he was a bucking bull trying to throw off a rider in a rodeo.

The Heavensword remained absolutely stuck in its place, and Ketis too maintained her footing on the ancient phase whale's dry and leathery skin.

It was not a comfortable ride, though!

The Heavensword became so distracted in its efforts to neutralize the phase whale that it had slackened in the protection offered to its current wielder.

Ketis gritted her teeth and tried her best to keep an iron grip on the weapon. She knew that letting go of it would definitely deprive her of a lot of protection!

"Is this... what you were after all along, Heavensword?"

The weapon did not respond to her query, but she wasn't stupid.

How easy was it for a grand work to traverse hundreds of thousands of light-years of distance and appear in an entirely different galaxy?

Unless the Heavensword mastered a more advanced method of teleportation, the amount of energy it expended to travel to the Red Ocean had to be astronomical!

In a circumstance where the current environment was no longer friendly to ancient weapons such as the Heavensword, the huge loss of energy could not be replenished so easily!

Ketis wondered whether it was worthwhile for the Heavensword to intervene in such a high-handed manner just to save her life.

Maybe the relic weapon truly valued her potential to make it further as a swordmaster than any citizen of the Heavensword Association.

Maybe the Heavensword had high hopes for Ketis to advance to Master Mech Designer and start forging little brothers and sisters to spread its heritage.



Maybe the ancient sword still had hopes that Ketis would come around and agree to become the next Heavensword Saint.

Ultimately, the Heavensword did not give her a straight answer. Its actions already spoke for themselves.

The more the Heavensword infiltrated the phase whale's body, the less options the massive creature had left to resist the intrusion.

At this point, the phase whale began to experience an emotion that he had rarely felt in his lengthy life.

He became afflicted by fear!

Emotions relating to distress and uncertainty dominated his psyche. This caused the phase whale to jerk and wrench his body harder.

His flight-and-flight instincts had kicked in, and all he wanted to do at this moment was to escape this prison and the abnormally powerful sword as soon as possible!

Unfortunately, the enormous chains that kept him locked in this gigantic cell for many ages had only partially been severed.

Around a dozen or so chains hung slack against his body as the prison facility had already cut them loose.

That still left at least twice as much that still remained whole and stuck to the surrounding walls. Each of these chains not only made sure that the gigantic inmate remained fixed in place, but they also blocked or heavily limited much of his spatial manipulation abilities.

For example, an unbounded phase whale could easily disappear from this pocket space and return to normal space on the spot. A creature that possessed so much affinity and understanding of phasewater had no need to pass through the exit that was originally built for mortal life forms.

That was out of the question at the moment. The original builders of this prison facility had been so thorough about constructing this crucial cell that it had built more than the required chains needed to keep the phase whale stuck in its place!

The phase whale resisted regardless because he was smart enough to sense an enormous threat to himself.

"Huuuwwhhaaaaaaa!"

The whale forcibly roused himself from his slumber faster, inflicting serious damage onto his mentality and organs that had previously been put in a state of hibernation.

He did everything he could to summon more strength, protect his body from getting sabotaged and dislodge the tiny but extremely powerful sword that was embedded in his flesh!

It was to no avail. From the moment the Heavensword sank into his hide, his fate was already sealed.

Ketis grew increasingly more astounded as she became a spectator to this remarkable sight.

So much took place at this time that she could never study them all. She could only observe as much as she could with the help of the elevated senses granted by the Heavensword and store the data so that she could go over them later.

The relic weapon utilized so many refined techniques that she could spend decades on deciphering them all! Each of these methods represented valuable portions of higher-level swordsmanship and energy manipulation that she had never gotten in touch with before!

Eventually, the phase whale slackened off in his resistance. The Heavensword had crippled too much of his internal body systems that he could no longer control his own flesh, let alone dislodge the sword that was responsible for his weakening!

Once the phase whale's formidable phasewater organs had all been sealed through a mysterious process that made Ketis dizzy when she tried to study it in further detail, the Heavensword finally enacted its final measure.

It began to capture the phase whale in earnest.

"Hhhhhuuuuuhhhgguuuaa..."

The whale sensed what the sword tried to do and began to exhibit fear.

The creature did not want to get caught!

The Heavensword did not care about the ancient whale's feelings. It began to weave a grand technique that caused it to exert more energy than before. A large amount of heavenly energy burned as the sword began to produce a powerful spatial effect over the entire body of its current prey.

Once the grand weaving was complete, it began to trigger, causing the space around the phase whale to distort and shrink in a particular way!

Starting from the point where Ketis stood, the massive aquatic beast's body began to shrink and distort as if it was being vacuumed by the Heavensword!

The speed in which this took place was astounding. It only took less than thirty seconds for the Heavensword to swallow the entire phase whale!

Chapter 4823 Heaven Kissed

"What did you do?!" Ketis uttered in shock!

She could sense that the Heavensword had managed to capture a living phase whale in his entirety!

Inside a massive internal space that Ketis could not access or look into, she could vaguely tell that it had become the latest home of the ancient whale!

This... was the greatest purpose of the Heavensword. There were not many opportunities for a relic weapon to come across a weakened and immobilized phase whale, especially not without the Big Two swooping in to claim the creature for themselves.

Now, the sword that originated from the old galaxy had managed to capture what passed as a god in the native alien community.

As long as the Heavensword studied the phase whale and assimilated its power in whatever fashion, its application and abilities related to space would surely skyrocket!

"It turns out that the Heavensword is a self-evolving weapon!"

Maybe all weapons at the level of a grand work possessed the capacity to improve their functions and evolve over time.

She still thought that the Heavensword was quite exceptional in this regard. It had existed for so long and experienced so much time without a strong wielder that it had naturally grown to be a lot more independent, willful and self-sufficient.

Taking the initiative to capture a living phase whale did not sound so ridiculous anymore.

She did not even raise her eyebrow when she realized that a sword that was physically smaller than her own Greatsword could swallow up a starship-sized organism without breaking apart.

Having gone on multiple expeditions and witnessing a lot of crazy and incredulous sights, what just happened was not as funky.

Ketis could feel that her time with the Heavensword had come to an end. The weapon exerted a lot of strain in its attempt to capture the phase whale. This also induced a heavier strain on Ketis as well.

The ball of heavenly energy that helped to bridge the gap between herself and the powerful sword had dwindled by over 90 percent!

"Take me back, please." She requested.

Ketis did not want to get left behind in this gigantic cell!

It took less than a single eyeblink for Ketis to return on the battle-scarred floor.

Scorch marks, damaged walls, shattered debris and a lot of body parts that had been hacked to pieces littered the entire space!

Ketis sighed in relief now that she saw that she had rejoined her fellow humans. The people who spotted her abrupt return even lifted up their arms and cheered!

She briefly waved at them but directed most of her concentration to the Heavensword.

One of the many lessons she had learned from Ves was that nothing came for free!

She may have been fooled at first and maintained the assumption that the Heavensword was truly trying to look after her, but she was anything but naive.

The effort it invested into capturing the phase whale showed that the Heavensword possessed clear desires and the ability to act on them. It was an intelligent blade that had evolved over many years.

Indeed, her suspicions turned out to be accurate as the Heavensword conveyed one more thought.

She frowned for a moment and mulled over its request. The relic weapon did not issue an overbearing request, which meant that she was not obliged to act.

It was not in her nature to leave her debts unpaid. Everything had a price, and refusing to pay it incurred another price. There was no way she would make the foolish decision to offend a grand work that had just swallowed up a phase whale!

"You've shown me a lot, but I need lots of time to digest what I have learned." She whispered to the Heavensword that still exuded a lot of power. "To be honest, I am interested in designing a swordsman mech that embodies the concept of heaven and its many facets as well. The former citizens of the Heavensword Association in my clan will love what I have in store. I am not sure my skills are up for it yet, however. I estimate that it may take a few years before I can design a mech that can do heaven justice."

The Heavensword possessed a lot of confidence in her. Just as Ketis had been studying the weapon that she temporarily wielded, the powerful blade also took a good look at her! It was impossible for her to hide anything from a grand work of unsurpassed might.

Fortunately, Ketis was not Ves. She did not hold a lot of unspeakable secrets that she really did not want to spread. She was a swordmaster and she had nothing to be ashamed about.

Before the Heavensword left, Sharpie sprung out of the blade with a satisfied and blissful expression.

The miniaturized translucent copy seemed to have enjoyed her stay in the ancient weapon. Her outfit changed into a slender and more feminine copy of the pale white robes of the Heavensword Saint. Her exposure to so much heavenly energy also caused her to acquire a purer and more sacred demeanor.

"Heaven! Heaven! Heaven!" She shouted in her squeaky voice.

Ketis did not look amused. She stared at her companion spirit in admonition before jerking her head in dismissal.

"Heaven... Heaven... Heaven..." Sharpie spoke before entering Ketis' mind.

The Heavensword chose this moment to disappear. Its abrupt departure left a void behind that already caused Ketis to miss its overpowering presence.

An immediate sense of emptiness and exhaustion overtook her body. If not for the reinforcement of her recently repaired combat armor, she would have slumped over already.

Ketis hadn't noticed how much of a toll it took to hold the Heavensword!

Her willpower had run ragged at this time. She overstrained herself so much that she found herself unable to muster any desire to wield a sword for the rest of the day.

She was utterly spent for this battle. If she had no other choice but to fight, then she would be better off using a firearm.

At least the Heavensword had quietly taken care of the greatest threat in this pocket space. She couldn't imagine what it would be like if the phase whale still tried to get out of jail.

"Nhgh..."

She shook her helmeted head in order to clear her mind. As much as she tried to resist the influence of the Heavensword and preserve the purity of her own sword style, she could not hide the truth that she had already been influenced.

The Heavensword showed off too many tricks to her. Many of them were so objectively good that Ketis could not help but assimilate them into her own repertoire.

Blindly denying all of these best practices would not do her much good. This battle reminded her once again that she urgently needed to increase her strength and develop more effective sword techniques in order to cope with the powerful transphasic technologies that she would no doubt encounter again in the future.

The proper way to deal with this situation was to absorb what she learned in a way that enriched her sword style rather than replace it entirely. She did not want to lose her focus on sharpness, but she did not mind it if she broadened it with a couple of tricks taught by the Heavensword.

"Besides, I've gained a lot of inspiration and ideas for my next mech designs."

The Heavensword already conveyed a strong desire for Ketis to design mechs based on its properties.

Naturally, there was no way she could design a mech that could come close to replicating its god-like powers, but there may be ways for her to reproduce the feel of heaven.

Aside from that, Ketis also recalled the power of vibration. It would be great if she could incorporate it into a mech design that was specifically designed to breach transphasic defenses.

A project like this came with considerable technical challenges. Just shaking a sword at a high frequency was not enough. She needed to develop an entirely new sword style that took maximum advantage of this effect while also being easy enough for general pilots to learn.

Aside from that, she also wondered whether it was possible to apply what she learned to the Samurai Project.

"Probably not." Ketis shook her head. "The swords paired with this mech design are already filled with tech. There is no room for other features."

All kinds of other mech design ideas filled up her mind. She had to make a conscious effort to set them all aside and wait until this ordeal had passed before she picked them up again.

Her distracted state had no consequence on the rest.

By now, the bewildered human troopers had fully taken control over the floor.

Surprisingly enough, they did not ruthlessly execute the paralyzed and despairing pescan combatants that had lost all of their courage and determination to fight.

The soldiers instead stripped the aliens of their armaments and restrained them so that they could be handled later.

At worst, the alien captives could always be used as hostages!

Although it wasn't safe for the civilians to come up yet, it became clear that the human troops felt confident enough to prepare for the final assault.

Ketis dragged herself over to Ves and his surviving honor guards. He had been consulting with General Verle and pushing for everyone to attack the final floor.

Everyone stopped and stared at her approach.

This made the exhausted swordmaster feel awfully self-conscious. It wasn't every day that a woman broke out with power comparable to that of an ace mech!

"Ketis..." Ves started. "Was that you back then?"

"Not really. The Heavensword did most of the heavy lifting."

"Was that the real Heavensword, Ketis?! I thought it was a replica or a projection of sorts!"

"It is the real deal, Ves. Trust me on this. It came all the way here from the old galaxy in order to give me a hand. We should be thankful for its intervention and pay it back for saving our hides."

"How did the Heavensword fall into your hands?"

"That's a long story." She replied. "I can't tell you much as it relates to the state secrets of the Heavensword Association. I am also sure that neither of us wants to talk about this particular setting."

"...You're right. This is not the time and place for explanations. Let's discuss our next steps. Do you have any insights of what awaits us on the final floor? There are powerful transphasic energy shields blocking our attempts to scout what the aliens are up to on the floor above our heads."

"As a matter of fact, I do have a basic understanding of how many pescans are up there. I can even tell you a rough estimate of the weapons and means they have left."

She quickly gave Ves a summary of what the Heavensword managed to detect through its powerful survey. While she was a little short on details, it was better than remaining in the dark!

"Hm..."

Ves, General Verle and the other nearby officers frowned. Though they were all happy that they managed to defeat the bulk of the enemy opposition, a lot of elite alien soldiers still remained entrenched in the floor above. The human forces would inevitably suffer a fair amount of casualties if they tried to push inside.

It was at this time that Minister Shederin Purnesse came from the rear so that he could pass on his proposal.

"You don't have to launch another attack, sir. We can end this conflict without bloodshed. The reason why Great Chief Jaharon did not negotiate with us in good faith was because he thought we were trapped and helpless lambs that he could slaughter us at will. That is no longer the case anymore. We have completely reversed the disparity in strength. Now that the pescans are on the weaker side, we can definitely negotiate a favorable compromise with the survivors!"

Ves widened his eyes. "You're right, Shederin!"

Chapter 4824 No Resistance

No one really wanted to fight anymore.

The aliens had suffered devastating losses in their attempt to defend the middle floor where they established their main camp.

The pescans might not be the best warrior race, but they put up a stiff resistance for the most part.

Their elites and the well-equipped troopers that previously served as the crack troops under the command of the great chief of the city-state of Davute had fought especially well!

As the best warriors that the pescan civilization had ever produced, they overcame the disparity in technology and sophistication and slain hundreds of human soldiers during the fight surrounding the main entrance!

No one had any time to grieve or reflect on the dead. Ves did not allow everyone to relax even though they had broken the bulk of the pescan resistance.

As the bewildered troopers prepared to launch a potential assault against the pescans entrenched on the top floor, Ves and a number of other people discussed their gains and options.

It was too bad that Ketis' mysterious power-up ended too soon. Ves would have wanted to see her swipe her Heavensword against the formidable transphasic defensive measures that the pescans had set up on the floor above.

He looked back over at the civilians where Ketis had gone to. Many of the individuals backed off as if they feared their bodies would get annihilated next by the all-powerful sword goddess.

Others did the opposite and expressed their heartfelt gratitude and admiration!

"Please teach us how to become as powerful as you, swordmaster!"

"Ketis! I would like to discuss a lucrative investment opportunity with you. What do you think about a sponsorship deal?"

"I will pay 500 MTA credits if you teach my children how to fight like you! I will pay another 500 MTA credits as a bonus if you can get them to win a junior tournament!"

The woman who had killed over a thousand members of a dying alien race treated these words as air. She showed absolutely no interest in engaging with anyone in conversation.

Despite her exhaustion, her imperious and sacred demeanor deterred anyone from getting close or barring her way. An invisible circle had formed around her that seemed to act like a force field that prevented anyone from violating her personal space.

She only started to relax once she reached the group of civilian Larkinsons. Each of them gave her warm smiles but did not bother her any further as she obviously wasn't in the mood to chat.

"Mommy!"

Kirian Larkinson left the side of Gloriana and Andraste and ran up to his mother so that she could lift his suited form to her armored chest.

"You were so cool, mommy! Can you teach me how to fight like that as well?!"

"One day, sweetie." Ketis responded as all of her tough demeanor melted as her maternal instincts rose to the foreground.

The civilians had been able to witness the battle through projected feeds. Ketis had clearly dazzled every other combatant due to her heroic performance.

Ketis had mixed feelings about her son admiring her performance in battle. She hadn't really fought with her own strength since the Heavensword dropped into her hand.

As Ketis indulged in Kirian's fancies, Ves and the other leaders came to a consensus on how to proceed.

"It doesn't hurt to try and see if the pescan survivors are amenable to talk." Minister Shederin reiterated his point. "Now that the pescans have lost a lot of leverage, our relationship with them has changed. We are no longer at their mercy anymore, and they know that as well. The only variables we need to take into account is how much mental stability this group has left. If the pescan race is highly emotional and in poor control of their impulses, then the aliens may decide to go down with the ship. We must grant them hope and make credible concessions in order to preserve their hope for a better future."

"Is that even possible?" General Verle questioned. "There is obviously no place for the pescans in the Red Ocean anymore. The founders of Davute tried to wipe out their race once, and I am sure that they will be eager to get rid of any potential claimants of their capital planet. Aside from that, the people that the aliens have abducted need a resolution as well. The aliens have killed too many humans. What the pescans have done is unforgivable."

Ves frowned and wanted to rub his face. Starting a negotiation with a cornered group of alien remnants was not as simple as it sounded. These were truly the last survivors of a race that had lived for many ages. Their civilization may be short in the eyes of other races, but they still carried a heritage that the humans had almost snuffed out entirely.

He glanced towards Major Durant. "What do you think?"

The commanding officer of the Davutan guard forces looked a lot more tired than before. Too many loyal soldiers had fallen in battle in the process of taking over this floor. Each of them died for a colonial state that was so new that they didn't even have a chance to experience it properly.

"Our overarching duty is to protect the VIPs and civilians under our care." The man said. "I am not entirely opposed to resuming the battle. I can understand the need to wipe out the remaining pescans if they remain stubborn towards us. I prefer not to issue this command if we can help it. Too much can happen during combat. This time, we lucked out because one of your soldiers turned into an angel with a sword. The next time, Great Chief Jaharon may decide to detonate a weapon of mass destruction that he had somehow smuggled into this facility."

"The pescans did not bring in weapons of mass destruction." Ves replied. "When Ketis was in her... special state... she was able to peer at the pescans holing up in the floor above us, and she did not detect any hardware that could wipe us out at once. The pescans probably didn't have any time to bring these superweapons to this pocket space."

"Hm, you are probably correct. One of the pillars of our original invasion plan was to identify and eliminate any alien weapons of mass destruction in advance. We did not want the original occupants to destroy their own planet in spite. That has already happened numerous times in the past when a colonizing fleet did not respect the resolve of the indigenous population."

Seeing that Major Durant did not object to restarting a dialogue with the aliens, Ves decided to put this plan into action.



Another curious change that took place was that Ves did not encounter any resistance when he wanted to be the one to talk with the alien.

Nobody really cared about this anymore after everything that happened. The enormous display of power from Ketis alone shut down all of the doubters and objectors.

This was yet another instance where absolute strength could override any pushback!

Ves waited for the technicians to set up an interface to project his body at the entrance to the final floor.

The surviving soldiers also had to reorganize themselves and check their remaining supplies before setting up defensive positions around the only entrance.

"Meow..."

Lucky slowly flew over at one point. Ves turned and grew concerned as he observed the damaged state of his cat.

The gem cat truly looked like he had crawled out of a warzone. His bronze-like exterior displayed numerous burn marks and several concerning puncture and cutting wounds.

Ves could even see dense and exposed electronic components underneath the deepest holes.

Fortunately, Lucky's regenerating properties had already kicked in. The damage to his internals and exterior parts were slowly being repaired through a process that Ves could not explain.

The huge quantities of exotics that Lucky ingested before came in very handy. The gem cat would definitely become as good as new after a few weeks of resting.

"Meow..."

"Don't worry. You can eat anything you find over here. Most of the alloys and exotics here aren't that impressive, but I am sure you can find a few valuable goodies here and there. We probably won't be able to claim the debris and abandoned alien products as our spoils, so don't hold back."

"Meow!..."

That was all the gluttonous cat needed to hear. Lucky instantly turned around and dove towards the pile of wreckage that used to consist of four giant battle suits. The pescans had concentrated a decent amount of valuable exotics in this collection of gear!

"We have completed our preparations, sir. You can start at any moment."

Ves smiled and took a quick look at his own appearance in order to make sure he looked presentable enough.

He had exposed himself to combat during the most stressful minutes of the battle for this floor. He had almost expended the capacity of the Amastendira in order to take out a lot of powerful threats within his range.

He took a look behind his back. A large circular portal was situated in a distant area that the pescans treated with great reverence.

This portal could generate a passageway that could safely bring every human trapped inside this prison facility back to normal space without any fuss or danger.

Already, a large team of scientists, engineers and other clever people had gathered around this crucial ancient alien device. They all volunteered to study the portal and figure out a way to activate it on the spot so that they could all go home.

Although Ves knew that the MTA would eventually come around and find a way to breach the pocket space, he had no idea whether the Association's methods carried any risks. Perhaps a forceful breaching attempt might cause a lot of damage or instability to the pocket space.

Instead of waiting for other people to utilize an unreliable method to form a tunnel between the two spaces, Ves would much rather access the primary control room and see whether he could go through the proper exit of this ancient prison.

A large projection of his armored form appeared before the entrance.

"Hello, pescans. I would like to speak to Great Chief Jaharon. We do not need to fight anymore. Please come out and talk so that we can figure out a way to resolve our differences."

Just as predicted, a two-dimensional projection of Great Chief Jaharon appeared a few seconds later.

Compared to last time, the alien looked a lot less composed! The leader of the few pescans left alive showed many signs of stress and strong emotional mood swings. This might not be a good sign.

[STAB KILL STAB KILL STAB KILL! BLOOD OF OURS STAIN THE SKIES OF DAWN! MURDEROUS INVADERS MUST FINISH STAB AND KILL THE STAR! FINISH US HASTILY AND DO NOT TORTURE OUR TIME! GODDESS OF STAB SHALL KILL OUR BODIES PRESENTED IN RESISTANCE!]

Ves inwardly reacted with surprise. Although the alien's faulty translation of standard language made it difficult to interpret the confusing string of words, he could nonetheless pick up the naked fear, anger and despair in the alien's voice.

It appeared that the surviving pescans not only became intimidated by Ketis' earlier display of power, but also assumed that she could still exert just as much force as before!

Ketis fought in a manner similar to the phase lords of the Red Ocean. The natives of the Red Ocean had very specific ideas on the combat power of a 'god', and that led to a lot of misunderstandings!

The pescans had no confidence in their ability to defeat any god, even a human one. Many of their plans became invalid after they mistakenly realized that they had abducted the wrong powerhouse!

Ves could take advantage of this as long as he made sure the aliens did not figure out that Ketis was not as scary as they thought.

He smirked. "Let's talk."

Chapter 4825 The Final Survivors

Ves assumed a more confident and domineering posture. He had to convey the impression that he had a 'god' on his side and did not have much restraint towards the idea of sending her out on another destructive spree.

Minister Shederin Purnesse made the same conclusions and began to feed a lot of useful advice and tips on how Ves should approach this conversation.

"Not enough. It is not enough, patriarch." The old man spoke over a private communication

channel.

"You need to look and sound more arrogant and vindictive. The pescans are accustomed to bowing their heads in front of the arrogant nunsers, so our goal is to tap into their old psychological reflexes. Do not forget that you hold the power of life and death over the remaining survivors. You need to treat these aliens as if they are already at your mercy."

The foreign minister was correct. Ves needed to fully play into this act in order to lower the chance that Great Chief Jaharon would act in spite or make any other outrageous moves.

"Do not talk about opening the portal or surrendering the control room first. That will make you sound desperate and give more leverage to the aliens. Instead, approach this conversation from the perspective of a leader who already has everything in hand but wants to extract more value out of a weak race. Ask more questions about the pescans. Make it look as if you are a collector that wants to

survey his wares."

Though that sounded a bit strange to Ves, he quickly made the necessary adjustments.

"Jaharon." He addressed the tired-looking alien directly. "As you can clearly see, your race stood no

chance in defeating my 'goddess' and champion. None of the subordinates you have left can offer any meaningful resistance against us. While your crimes towards our great human race are great, I still see value in your people. Not many members of your race are alive anymore. They have become

rare, and everything that is scarce holds greater value than before. I would prefer it if you do not make an unwise decision and spoil my merchandise."

The alien leader looked meeker and less defiant than before. Just as predicted, Jaharon fell back into

a more subservient aspect of himself when he thought he was facing an overwhelmingly powerful group of a superior race.

[We ask for living. Too small left. Never ask for fight. Woman god destroyed our big god. No longer

tunnel to distant stars. Death and block is waiting us. We are lost.]

Huh?

Jaharon threw out a lot of information in very little words. Ves had to ask a few more questions and enlist the aid of Minister Shederin to decipher what the aliens were saying.

Through the confusing but also illuminating words of the pescan leader that had been driven into despair, Ves and the others managed to puzzle out the alien master plan.

Even if it was not quite accurate or complete, Ves strongly felt that this was the reason for everything that happened in this abandoned alien facility!

It started from the moment the pescans evacuated into this pocket space in haste.

Just as many people had already guessed, the colonization fleet of the founders of Davute truly struck too quickly and ferociously for the pescan remnants to evacuate too many individuals and supplies.

The aliens who barely managed to escape the genocide of their entire race had a miserable time while reluctantly trying to build a settlement on these floors.

They did not dare to spread out and occupy the rest of the prison because they felt it was too oppressive and would bring them too far away from their other surviving compatriots.

Although the aliens tried to start up farms and set up water recycling plants, they simply did not

bring enough supplies to sustain their current level of population once they depleted their stockpile of prepared emergency food containers!

This had a strong psychological effect on the pescans. Not only did many of them lose the prospect of having children, they might even have to kill off the weakest and most useless survivors among them in order to ensure the entire population remained sustainable over the long term!

[Dark and death stalk the god prison. No longer cry as crying as died. Anti-home no home for us too

dark and no life. Future is in stars of distant. Must find leave.]

The pescans couldn't stand the thought of living in this ancient prison for the rest of their lives!

It did not matter that it was safe and completely hidden from the humans that had built their new

settlements on top of the former cities of the pescan civilization.

The pescans wanted to live! They wanted to evacuate from the planet by whatever means possible

and take refuge with the aliens who still managed to defend their territories against the relentless

onslaught of the human invaders.

Fortunately, the ancient prison might have become a shadow of its former self, but the pescans who

explored its state managed to gain limited control of it and learn a few pieces of crucial information.

The pescans somehow gained access to a feed to normal space. This enabled them to study the

humans over many years and conclude that breaking out on their own would instantly get them

killed by lots of mechs.

The remnant aliens also figured out how to control certain internal processes such as putting people

in and out of the cells as well as take people directly who were present in the middle of the

Government District of Kotor City!

After a bit more tinkering with the primary control room, the pescans also managed to discover the

greatest secret of this ancient prison.

Its largest and most well-defended cell held a living prisoner!

[The ancient forgotten god bleeds with vengeance and freedom. Dark but sleep, can help break cage that is wrapping after cooperation. Needed much words to placate god and beg for stomach pass to distant stars. Too bleed is weak must make you human stabbers turn knives away.]

"So that is what was going on all of this time!" General Verle managed to deduce the truth. "There was a phase whale sleeping in the central cell that could break out of the prison and take the pescan survivors out of human-occupied space. However, the Great Chief Jaharon did not have confidence that a single weakened phase whale could get them past so many powerful human forces. This is why the pescans bided their time. They wanted to gain more leverage over us in order to negotiate for safe passage."

This was a clever plan and one that probably had the highest chance of success. Though the pescans seriously underestimated the ruthlessness of humans, it was plausible for Davute to pay a heavy price to the MTA to secure safe passage for these aliens.

There was only one hindrance to the plan.

The interdiction fields that the colonial government maintained throughout Kotor City but

especially the Government District prevented the pescans from taking valuable humans hostage!

Without any leverage, the pescans recognized they had little hope in their ability to escape from

beyond the confines of human-controlled space.

This was why they decided to wait for better opportunities. If too much time had passed without any

positive developments, then Great Chief Jaharon had no choice but to enact his most desperate plan

and break out of the ancient prison without human hostages.

It was rather coincidental that the conquering humans chose to organize a founding ceremony on

this day.

The pescans were also lucky enough that a lot of human VIPs and important leaders happened to

gather in the center of the Government District on this important day!  
What was even better was that the Karlachs successfully launched a surprise attack against the Davutans in the very same Government District!  
After all of this took place, what truly enabled the pescans to enact their bold plan to take as many high-value hostages as possible was that the sabotage committed by the Karlachs also knocked out

the warp interdiction field generators!  
In the period they remained knocked offline, it became possible for the pescans to remotely teleport a lot of humans to the prison cells inside the hidden pocket space!  
Ves couldn't believe that the pescans came up with such a convoluted plan that depended on so many different factors falling into place, only for all of that to happen anyway!  
Personally, he put most of the blame on the rulers and owners of Davute. They were incredibly arrogant about building their seat of government on top of the most central location of the greatest pescan city-state to exist.  
The Davutans also showed insufficient regard for safety by compelling so many important figures to attend the founding ceremony at the front rows in such great numbers.  
What Ves finally faulted these darned Davutans for was that all of this could have been avoided if they had been a lot more thorough about hunting down any remaining survivors of the pescan race.  
Perhaps it was not all that bad, though. The humans here had won the most important battle while Ves was in a position to extract a lot of possible benefits from the final remaining leader of the former occupants of this planet.  
He just had to make sure to maintain the illusion of power while also making sure he did not drive the aliens into going down in a final blaze of glory.  
Ves started to think on how he could accomplish this. He already had a few ideas.  
"I prefer not to kill you all. The prisoners that my men have already taken are too few to sustain a

healthy slave population. If you agree to lay down arms, I can promise you that the other humans will not exterminate your race. To me, that is a huge waste of value. I am a businessman and a collector, and I see great value in keeping you in my private zoo."

His words caught the alien off-guard. [Understanding no. Death is scheduled as last god stabbed to die. Stab killers must tear our meat.]

Ves shook his head.

"No. I will not allow you to die. Do not underestimate my power. I not only have a goddess under my command, but I am a friend of the Mech Trade Association. You know about the MTA, right? I am their collaborator, and I have many more privileges than you think. For example, I am allowed to maintain a private collection of intelligent aliens for my own use. Look at what I have obtained up until this point."

He activated a second projection that displayed the Dragon's Den. The half-organic, half-mechanical starship looked so advanced and exotic to the alien great chief that he could not tell how powerful it was. The pescans had never been a starfaring race so their vision of spacecraft was too limited.

The projection changed to display the interior of the biomes that made the Dragon's Den so valuable to the Larkinson Clan.

It displayed many different alien forests, plains and other terrain features that provided comfortable if somewhat limited habitats to many different exobeasts.

The most important biome was the one that housed tens of thousands of members of the pakklaton race.

After years of captivity, the alien refugees turned test subjects tried to make the most of their new

forest biome. They built huts and settlements in the trees and built up a functional society where the

avian aliens could raise their children in relative peace.

It was not a dignified state of existence, but at least these captured aliens managed to stay alive!

After spending several years in constant fear and after suffering an enormous blow from a powerful human 'goddess', the few remaining pescans left alive became a lot more willing to seek a more outcome in their doomed conflict against the invaders of another galaxy! [Possible speaking confession survival.] Great Chief Jaharon said as his tall body drooped even further. [Must create pact and sever further knives.] "You do not have the qualifications to impose demands on us." Ves responded with a smirk as he maintained his superior act. "I have told you what I seek from your race. It is up to you to accept or refuse the only offer that will allow you and your fellow survivors to live past this day. Surrender and live. Resist and die. Choose quickly, because my patience is at a limit." It only took three more minutes for the transphasic energy shields that shielded the final entrance to disappear.

#### Chapter 4826 Rising Influence

The last group of resisting pescans had laid down their arms!

Ves earned a lot of admiration from the various leaders who had witnessed his discussion with the alien leader.

The Larkinsons had proven with their deeds today that the reputation they earned from concluding several successful expeditions was well-earned!

They not only freed the captives from their cells, but also led the fight against the pescan remnants that had camped in the upper floors of the prison facility.

If this was the extent of the contributions of the Larkinson Clan, then the various movers and shakers of Davute would only conclude that the Larkinsons were brave and resourceful.

It wasn't until Ketis exploded with power that virtually matched that of an ace mech that the group of helpless leaders truly experienced the gaps between the Larkinson Clan and their own organizations!

Many of them didn't have an ace mech at their disposal, let alone an expert mech. Their advantages in business, trade channels, infrastructure and specialized services may exceed that of the Larkinsons, but they were absolutely inferior when it came to exploration and combat!

The Red Ocean was not a peaceful dwarf galaxy. Years of comfortable living in a well-developed port system such as Davute had eroded their sense of danger.

Too many colonists and pioneers had lost their respect towards the indigenous enemies that possessed an undying hatred for humanity!



The insane chain of events that happened today served as a wakeup call to many of these self-assured leaders.

Their faith in the institutions of the colonial state of Davute had either collapsed or suffered a lot of damage.

Perhaps they wouldn't go as far as the Larkinson Clan and invest a lot of money to build up a fully-fledged mech army, but they would definitely take their security more seriously after this ordeal!

The stakeholders of Davute also became a lot more interested in deepening their relationships with the Larkinson Clan!

Nobody disliked befriending a strong and highly competent local power. If they could gain the backing and the protection of the Larkinson Clan during a future crisis, then they would gain a strong guarantee that they would be able to survive a future calamity!

Of course, not everyone was willing to bet on a single horse, but it was absolutely not a bad idea to take advantage of the moment and brush up their favorability with the Larkinson Clan.

Who knew whether they could walk over and talk to the leaders of this flamboyant clan without needing to wait in line.

A lot of CEOs, executives and owners converged onto the key figures of the clan.

Gatherings formed around Chief Minister Novilon Purnesse, Minister Shederin Purnesse and even Gloriana Wodin as they took the lead in opening up a dialogue with many different organizations.

"We have built an extensive transportation network in our newly established colonial state. Together with the numerous logistic hubs that we have established at multiple strategic locations, we are well-poised to supply mechs and other necessary war supplies to the frontlines of the upcoming war. We can offer your mech company priority access to our shipping lines, allowing you to ship goods and parts to your customers in a matter of weeks rather than months. As long as you sign an exclusivity deal with us..."

"Our business operations in the Krakatoa Middle Zone may not interest you, but we have a sister company that has invested in the Magair Middle Zone earlier than us. With the help of our extensive contacts within the local governments of the colonial states, we can provide you with instant access to their markets and reduce the tax and regulatory burdens they impose on your mech company..."

"What a lovely set of children you have over here. Your girls are so adorable and your baby son is such a cutie! Could you share their designer baby formulas with us? We would love to have children that are just as cute and well-behaved."

Meanwhile, Ketis thankfully did not have to entertain the blathering of self-important people. She had taken refuge among the circle of Larkinsons who had nothing to do at the moment because they weren't soldiers or weren't good with talking to outsiders.

Right now, both her son Kirian and her student Andraste were looking up at her with stars in their eyes.

"That was a copy of the Heavensword, right?!" Kirian asked. "Did you make it or did the Heavensworders give it to you as a present? How come you became so strong when you wielded it? Can you teach me to become just as cool as you while whacking down aliens by the hundreds?"

"You were so strong, teacher!" Andraste bounced on her feet while trying her best to hold back her glee! "I really liked it when you slashed your sword and sent out huge sword attacks. You became just as strong as a mech at the time! Can you show me how to become just as strong as a mech?"

Despite her weariness, Ketis felt a bit more energized after listening to the childish requests of the two presumptuous brats.

She reached out with her armored hands and lightly tapped them both on their helmets.

"You need to learn how to walk before you can run. Do you think swordplay is all about swinging a sharp blade and launching energy attacks? You may as well polish your marksmanship instead and wield a rifle if that is what you are after. Every form of swordsmanship is rooted in the fundamentals. You need to be able to learn how to fight both flawlessly and creatively with the basic set of sword techniques that every beginner learns before you can move on to more powerful and lethal techniques. You can forget about learning such destructive moves before you have become adults."

"Awww..."

"That's too long!"

Ketis placed her hands on her hips. "Now who is the swordmaster here?! I do not want to deny you the opportunity to become as strong as a sword as me one day, but you need to follow a strict training regime in order to train your body and drill all of the fundamental techniques in your muscles and bones. It is only at the point where you have mastered the basic techniques and become proficient in a basic sword style that you will be able to perform all of those moves in battle without requiring conscious thought. That is the absolute minimum that I expect from you before you develop your own sword styles."

As Ketis and the two sword-enthused children kept talking, Ves became preoccupied by entirely different matters.

Since he had negotiated the surrender of the final pescan survivors who could still resist, it was up to him to make sure that the aliens actually abided by their word.

This could still be a trap, so Ves and the human soldiers remained on high alert as the transphasic energy shields powered down.

It was not until the pescans exited the top floor and walked down the ramp in an orderly line that Ves became convinced that the bluff succeeded.

This was the best possible outcome in his opinion. Neither Ves nor the aliens wanted to keep fighting each other. It was great that the remnants of the pescan race decided to take refuge in the Larkinson Clan.

Although such a major promise upset plenty of people who wanted the pescans to suffer retribution and be wiped out from existence, Ves did not intend to break his word.

As an individual who got betrayed and screwed over far too many times than he could count, he could never bring himself to break a serious promise made to another party. He did not want to go down this dark path where people could no longer rely on his word.

Ves knew that he would have to put quite a bit of effort into convincing the colonial state of Davute as well as the Mech Trade Association to keep the final members of the pescan race alive.

This was a troublesome affair. Humanity's general policy towards intelligent and sentient alien races was to get rid of them entirely in order to minimize any possibility that they could grow into a serious threat and competitor.

After all, one of the reasons why humanity managed to rise up so quickly in the Milky Way during the Age of Conquest was because far too many rival alien empires underestimated the upstart race.

Given this explosive history, it would be foolish for human civilization to exhibit similar complacency towards other alien races.

This was especially a concern with sentient aliens!

Any non-human race that could potentially grow into a serious competitor to humanity had to be cleaned up sooner rather than later!

It was seriously against humanity's best interest to keep both the pakklavons and the pescans alive.

Even the thought of keeping them alive as zoo exhibits or test subjects was controversial. The entertainment industry loved to make lots of action or horror dramas about captive aliens breaking out of their cages and eventually coming back with an enormous fleet to raze everything humanity had built on top of the corpses of rival alien civilizations!

"It shouldn't be too difficult to convince the MTA to let me keep these pescans." Ves judged. "I'm not as weak as before. Besides, the pescans are so weak that they can hardly make anyone feel threatened."

The aliens continued to surrender themselves to custody. Pescan soldier after pescan soldier arrived downstairs. They voluntarily allowed the human soldiers to restrain their bodies and disable the combat capabilities of their battle suits.

The rank and importance of the pescans continued to increase over time. Ves decided to call over Helena again in order to have a like-minded person to chat with and to increase his intimidation factor.

"How... remarkable." She whispered as her translucent body turned in a complete circle. "So many humans and aliens have recently died here, but... there is nothing for me to pick up on this battlefield. Do you know how special that is, Ves?"

"No?"

"Another authority has absorbed the traces of the deceased! I bet it has to do with that all-powerful sword that Ketis wielded earlier. That weapon is special in many ways."

Ves perked up. "So it is true that Ketis really wielded the Heavensword in battle?"

"Oh, yes, brother. Even I was able to feel the sheer power and age of that blade. It did not look as if Ketis had any control over the Heavensword. It looked clear to me that it was the weapon that wielded Ketis. She is still marked by its presence in several different ways."

"Is that good or bad?"

"It depends on how you categorize them." Helena shrugged. "The Heavensword has its own presence and signature. If they do not match with Ketis' own intentions, then you have a serious conflict on your hands. I highly suggest you give Ketis a good checkup when you get back to normal space. She has been marked by heaven when she shouldn't be a part of it. That sort of exposure can never be worked away so easily. This is also a warning to you that you should not handle stuff that is too powerful for you to control."

Ves understood her sister's concerns, but he was pretty confident in his ability to resist all kinds of unnatural influences.

"Sir!" One of his honor guards called. "Great Chief Jaharon of the former city-state of Davute is descending from the ramp. He will be arriving shortly."

"Understood."

The alien leader himself immediately stood apart from his fellow pescans. Jaharon not only possessed the gravitas of a long-time leader, but also wore an elaborate green-and-blue robe with various alien markings.

The physically formidable alien did not walk like a defeated soldier who had put himself at the mercy of his opponents.

Instead, the great chief strode forward while radiating grim determination and resignation.

As the leader who had ultimately negotiated a surrender to the humans, he had changed the course of his alien race's history forever!

Whether Jaharon would be remembered as a sinner or forgotten by everyone depended on how well Ves could abide by his promises.

## Chapter 4827 Cycle of Death

The surrender of Great Chief Jaharon himself represented the final act of submission from the remnants of the pescan race to the Larkinson Clan.

It took great humility and forbearance for a once-powerful leader to admit the dire circumstances of his people.

The most rational choice had always been to beg the humans to take the pescans in as slaves, but how many sentient beings were truly willing to bow their heads and give up whatever freedom they had left?

It was one thing to be born as a slave or a serf, but the pescans had once lived pretty good lives just a decade ago. The group that had managed to guarantee their continued survival by hiding inside an obscure pocket space happened to consist of the leader and his hand-picked men from the most powerful polity of the former pescan civilization that once dominated the planet.

Each of them used to be political leaders, senior military leaders, elite soldiers, experienced engineers and seasoned researchers.

Now, these tall and oddly-proportioned humanoid aliens had all dropped down to the bottom of another society's totem pole.

As non-humans in a great civilization where only humans were tolerated, the lives of the pescans while remaining in captivity would undoubtedly be a downgrade to the kind of life enjoyed before.

Even their attempts to build up a basic society inside this dreary prison facility was better because they could at least make their own decisions!

Now, these pescans all became downcast because they lost the final quality that every sentient organism cherished. Freedom never sounded all that valuable. Too many humans and aliens took it for granted when they had it in abundance.

It was only when others took away their freedom that they truly understood how much of themselves they gave away.

In order to prevent the pescans from generating any dangerous ideas and to impress upon them that they did not surrender in vain, Ves continued to make a show of force.

He may not be able to bluff them anymore with Ketis acting like a wrathful goddess who had descended from heaven, he could still resort to other tricks.

Aside from summoning a 'death goddess' in the form of Helena, Ves had fully unleashed his glow, allowing him to present a more powerful version of himself.

It was all smoke and mirrors, to be honest. If the pescans had not given up their resistance and came down with their weapons, they would have been able to do a lot of damage.

Fortunately, the pescans did not show any signs of finding out that they had been fooled. They fully regarded Ves and Helena as gods. Even if there were differences between the gods native to the Red Ocean and these two odd human deities, power was still power. It was the nature of lower life forms to inherently recognize the superiority of higher life forms.

When Great Chief Jaharon finally presented himself to the apparent leader of the human forces, he studied the patriarch of the Larkinson Clan carefully.

As an alien that had spent years observing the happenings of the humans that had taken his old city-state as their new homes, the various workers and officials in the Government District often mentioned the Larkinson Clan.

This was especially the case in the last half year. Ever since the Larkinsons commenced the Trailblazer Expedition, they seemed to accomplish one shocking feat after another.

Jaharon never realized that the public perception of the Larkinsons did not match their true strength at all. It was already remarkable for this clan to have one 'god' among its ranks, but three of them was absolutely astonishing!

In the galactic community of the Red Ocean, the presence or absence of a phase lord was an important criteria of strength and prestige. Their role was equivalent to that of high-ranking mech pilots in human society.

When Ves studied the highest remaining leader of the pescan race with his eyes and other senses, he immediately understood Jaharon's basic circumstances.

The great chief was fairly old and looked to be a lot wiser than his more ignorant subordinates. His humanoid body was over 3 meters tall but his advanced age had diminished his once-strong body.

As an individual who could barely call himself a phase lord, Ves could clearly sense that Jaharon did not contain a speck of phasewater in his body.

This disappointed Ves a bit, but he had already foreseen this outcome. If even ambitious leaders from the major alien races found it troublesome to integrate phasewater in their bodies, then the members of minor races such as the pescan faced a steeper hurdle!

"Jaharon." Ves spoke the alien's name. "Welcome to your new life. You have made a wise decision. As long as you continue to serve my clan and keep your former subordinates in line while you stay in your new home, we will grant you minor privileges such as better food and access to technology."

The former great chief bent his head even further as acknowledgement of the new reality for his race.

[Pescan living must protect in your god. Will not stab as god as survive.]

Helena's expression turned funny after hearing the translated words produced by a gadget attached to the alien's neck.

"He needs a better translator. There is little point in conversing with this alien if he can only say awful words."

Ves could actually communicate with the alien without needing any translators at all, but he was too tired and weary to bother with such measures. He merely wanted to make sure that Jaharon remained docile.

"I am not the most powerful individual in my society, but do not underestimate my influence. I will keep you and your fellow pescans out of the hands of the Davutans and the mechers, but that is only on the premise that you hold value to my clan. Do not cause trouble and you shall be fine, is that clear?"

Ves engaged the alien leader in an awkward conversation before he waved the alien away. He had already lost interest in the great chief as the pescan was not even a phase lord.

Now that he thought about it, the only phase lord he truly met was the Trampler of Stars. That nunser leader had made a powerful impression on him and his clan.

It would have been great if his clan had been able to defeat the Trampler of Stars during the Battle of Ramage Repulsor. The research value of a living phase lord or at least one whose corpse was reasonably intact was insane!

Although his biotechnology foundation was too shallow, Ves could easily recognize that a more competent biomech designer could potentially turn such a high-value body into an amazing biomech!

It would be like creating a biological juggernaut but with the dimensions of a normal mech!

Ves shook his head. Whether he knew it or not, Great Chief Jaharon had potentially escaped the fate of getting converted into a biomech by his new owner.

"So what now?" Ketis asked.

"Now, I need to get to the primary control room and see how I can activate that damned gate." Ves replied.

Now that the pescans at the top floor had all abandoned their former stations and come down, several teams of human soldiers and technicians had already moved up in order to survey and secure the entire place.

Once they confirmed that the pescans hadn't planted any mines or other dastardly traps, Ves and his sister ascended up the ramp and took good luck at the defensive arrangements.

Since there were no other entrances or chambers on this floor, the only way to attack it was by charging forward, which was absolutely not trivial.

The walls, turrets and supply depots all showed that a relatively small amount of aliens could have held this site for a long time!

"The smell of death is much fainter here." Helena remarked. "I can still sense a lot of residual deaths enough for them to get killed."

"There are no rights and wrongs in the competitive struggle for survival, Ves. Humanity in its down below, but here... the aliens who were stationed here came so close to passing as well. It is good that you persuaded them to lay down their arms. This could have been a bloodbath for both the aliens and the people on your side."

"I would have thought that you would be in favor of increased casualties."

"Just because I am empowered by death does not mean I am eager to spread it around." His sister frowned at him. "Death is a natural part of life. From individual deaths to the extinction of entire races, the passing of one group of organisms will provide room for better adapted organisms to prosper. Anything that falls outside of that is excessive and can generate a lot of grievances and other unpleasanties."

Ves looked intrigued. "I think I know what you are talking about, but... do you think it was right for me to save the pescan race from extinction? Without my intervention, these aliens would have gotten wiped out without a doubt. Regardless of their actions, just existing within human space is enough for them to get killed."

"There are no rights and wrongs in the competitive struggle for survival, Ves. Humanity in its current form does not want to share its living space with other sentient alien races, so in that sense the pescans were fated to become extinct. Your decision to defy this convention is not an act against nature, but rather an act against the human leaders who set these anti-alien policies in the first place. It is them you need to be concerned about. That is not a matter I can intervene in. Only you can solve this problem."

"Hm, I already figured that out. I will try my best to keep these pescans alive, but only because my honor and my integrity as a mech designer demands it. If I really can't prevent the mechers from putting them to the torch... well, at least I tried."

Ves would never ruin his relationship with the MTA or rebel against human civilization just to keep a bunch of ugly humanoid aliens alive. If the pressure truly became too great, then he had no qualms about throwing the pescans under the shuttle.

In any case, the intervention of an organization that was far too powerful for Ves to resist was pretty much a force majeure event in his book. It wouldn't be his fault if he was unable to fulfill his promise because there was no expectation for him to fight against a group that was equivalent to a cosmic disaster.

That said, Ves did not want to make use of this copout if he could help it. The pescans may have killed a lot of humans during the earlier battle, but the relationship between him and the aliens had changed ever since the latter issued their surrender.

"Sir! We have found a crystalline interface that matches your description."

Ves perked up. "I will be coming over right away!"

The pescan tech around him was not remarkable in any way, so he resolutely suspended his examination of them and moved all the way to the end of the long hall.

Just like the secondary control room that was located in the lower floors, the primary one had suffered a lot of damage in the distant past.

Many crystals of every color of the rainbow had been shattered or snapped in half.

However, the primary control room was much larger than the one down below. This meant that it could hold at least thrice as many control crystals.

Even if a mysterious party had wrecked this place, a lot more crystals remained intact in absolute terms.

The pescan researchers and engineers hadn't been sitting on their thumbs while they remained stuck in this hidden refuge. They had attempted to repair the lightly damaged crystals while using their own tech to interface with the ancient interface.

Ves glanced at the alien consoles that were clearly connected to many different crystals via wires. their own tech to interface with the ancient interface.

Ves glanced at the alien consoles that were clearly connected to many different crystals via wires. He couldn't read any of the alien texts and pictograms scrolling through the projected screens!

"This is going to be troublesome."

Fortunately, he could still count on his 'hacked' purple crystal to gain access to the ancient control system!

## Chapter 4828 The Power of Prestige

Now that he had come to this point, it was time for Ves to open a portal and lead everyone back to normal space.

After Ves and a number of specialists studied the convoluted attempts of the pescans to gain control over the main control center, they found that the pescans had employed a lot of clever solutions.

"These aliens had years to decipher how these alien crystals work. It shouldn't be surprising that they managed to gain control over them in their own way."

The pescan texts and pictograms were not completely unreadable. The pescans studied humans long enough to develop rudimentary translators. It was easy to obtain the software and quickly reprogram it so that it could translate the pescan data screens.



That didn't bring them any closer to opening a portal because it turned out that the entire control system was still in a locked state.

"Oh. So it hasn't been lifted yet." Ves furrowed his brows.

Several hours ago, Ves and the pescans issued a lot of conflicting orders to the prison systems. This caused the entire controls to lock up and enter into a forced security mode.

In the end, Ves not only had to use the purple control crystal that he had fabricated inside the System Space, but also work together with a bunch of computer engineers and other specialists to lift the lock up state.

Though it took a bit longer than he wished, the people working on this problem were absolute leaders in their own fields!

After all, anyone invited to attend the founding ceremony at the VIP seating blocks were part of the cadre of their respective organizations.

Ves inadvertently impressed another batch of people in this way. They became astounded by the ingenuity of the purple crystal that he had made and how easily it was able to fool the alien controls so well.

"We did it, sir!" A virtual security engineer called. "We have managed to get past the final checkpoint. I think these settings are related to the portal."

Turning on the alien portal was not as simple as flipping a switch or pressing a button.

The reason for that was because there was no existing portal back in normal space.

Fortunately, it was not as if this portal tech was equivalent to that of human beyonder gates. A destination gate was not necessary, but recommended.

According to the information provided by the control interface, the current settings enabled an authorized user to specify the coordinates of the exit position.

Anyone who passed through the portal would appear in any space within a certain range of the center of the Government District.

This could also be used to transport people in the city directly into a cell!

"So this is how the pescans managed to abduct us in the first place." Ves looked enlightened. "Can you find out whether the aliens used this system to abduct humans in the past?"

"We have yet to find any logs. It may be buried in a different alien menu."

"Nevermind, then."

Ves was pretty certain that the pescans covertly used this powerful teleportation function to kidnap a bunch of unwitting humans in the past.

The pescans needed to learn more about the humans that had taken over their planet by force, and getting their information out of the mouths of government officials could provide them with a wealth of key information!

This may have been how the aliens who were completely unfamiliar with humans and human society in the past not only knew about the founding ceremony, but knew exactly who to target in order to gain maximum leverage!

"Did we find any human prisoners or... their remains?"

"No, sir."

"A pity."

No one cared about those unlucky victims if they existed. The former human captives just wanted to go home now. They all concentrated their efforts in understanding and deciphering the complicated portal settings.

They eventually managed to deduce enough clues to figure out how to configure the exit coordinates of anyone passing through the portal!

"Alright! Good work, everyone!" Ves clapped as all of the other experts smiled in accomplishment and relief. "Let us quickly open up a portal in the middle of the Government District and return home as victorious conquerors. You should all remember what we have done on this day. We not only managed to escape from our cells, but successfully overthrew its last jailors!"

Though Ves and Ketis did most of the work, it did not matter too much if others gained a little credit.

Ves was sure that once the story of what happened here spread out, he and his clan would definitely reap most of the glory!

Just as Ves wanted to set the coordinates, Major Durant showed up and momentarily pulled him aside.

"Wait. Don't be in a hurry to open up a passage. Let us talk about this first, patriarch."

"You are not wrong, patriarch, but it is the manner of our return that I wish to discuss." The officer of the Davutan guard forces replied. "It is in my judgment that it is better to put the exit location as far as possible from the center of the Government District as possible. We just survived not one, but two separate attempts to harm the foundation of our colonial state. Enemies may still be abound, and the center plaza is too exposed of a location to serve as a safe exit point. We should put the exit at a side

The earlier battle had given him a stark reminder of how difficult it was to win any battle without the use of mechs. Ves spent so much time and effort designing many of them that it was painful to be deprived of them when he needed their combat power the most!

"What is wrong, major? I would have thought that you would be even more eager than me to bring your charges back to civilization and safety." Ves smiled.

"You are not wrong, patriarch, but it is the manner of our return that I wish to discuss." The officer of the Davutan guard forces replied. "It is in my judgment that it is better to put the exit location as far away from the center of the Government District as possible. We just survived not one, but two separate attempts to harm the foundation of our colonial state. Enemies may still be abound, and the center plaza is too exposed of a location to serve as a safe exit point. We should put the exit at a side

street and send one of us ahead so that we can confirm that the portal is working correctly and inform the local military units to reinforce this position."

All of that sounded logical to Ves, and it was probably the best way to go forward if they wanted to maximize their safety while minimizing any fuss.

It did not sit well to Ves, though. He had a different sort of exit in mind.

"No. I get what you are coming from, but I will not allow you to deny the victory that we have secured today. Let me tell you how we will go about this. We will open a portal in the center of the Government District and file out with our heads held high as we invite the media to witness our successful return. My clansmen will bring out the pescans that we have taken captive and show to the citizens of Davute that we have dealt with the culprits of our abduction."

Major Alden Durant did not like what he heard. "While I appreciate what you and Swordmaster Ketis have done, the rest of us have contributed to the battle as well, so please do not dismiss our opinions. This is a sensitive matter, Patriarch Ves. All matters pertaining to this pocket space and alien prison must remain confidential. Holding a victory parade will do the opposite."

The man's words caused Ves to lose patience with the Davutans. He stepped forward and did not hesitate to make his displeasure known!

"Now you listen here, you drone. I am sick and tired of all of the crap that your state and government has pulled off. I know you aren't personally responsible for any of its screwups, but it is undeniable that Davute has erred in letting the remnants of the pescan race retreat to this pocket space. You guys also failed to prevent the Karlachs from infiltrating your planet so that they could pull off a devastating surprise attack during the founding ceremony. What I find most awful was that you didn't even allow us to bring enough mechs and combat equipment to guarantee our own safety. A lot less people would have died if you took our security a lot more seriously!"

"We deeply apologize for that, patriarch. Our state will provide you with a satisfactory answer with regards to your"

"I'M NOT FINISHED!" Ves roared back as his anger boiled over! "The point I am trying to make is that you Davutans have put us into this dangerous situation to begin with! Out of all of the people involved here, it is only my clan and I that managed to bail you out and give us all a chance to climb out of the pit you dug for us. If it wasn't for us Larkinsons, you and your precious charges would have remained stuck in your cells until the pescans had managed to hatch their nefarious plan! If it wasn't for our swordmaster using one of our costliest and most precious trump cards, your men would have all been dead as the pescan soldiers depleted our ammunition and swarmed us with numbers! In short, this is mostly my victory, so I get to decide what to do, understood?! Besides, your state owes a lot of compensation to my clan."

It became clear that Major Durant truly did not want Ves to go through with this, but it was clear that he no longer had enough say in the matter anymore.

Hardly any human in the pocket space took the Davutan guard soldiers seriously anymore. It had always been the Larkinsons who took the lead and produced various miracles that ultimately allowed them to obtain the hope of returning home alive.

The reputation of Davute had diminished while the star of the Larkinson Clan had risen. Even the guard soldiers themselves started looking up to the Larkinsons!

Under these circumstances, Major Durant had no way of convincing enough people to oppose anything the Larkinsons wanted.

Ves did not blame Major Durant and his hapless soldiers. They were merely guards when it came down to it. They did not have the equipment, training and preparation to deal with many of the crazy events that happened today.

He softened up and lifted his arm so that he could pat Durant's armored shoulder.

"It isn't just our clan that needs this morale booster. It is also the other VIPs that need to go through this unique experience. If you force them to sneak in a back alley before whisking them off to a secret facility so that you can ensure they will keep their mouths shut about what they have experienced, how many of them will retain a good impression of Davute? Let this day end on a positive note for them. If you make them feel that they have participated and completed a wild but ultimately victorious adventure, they will not be as eager to blame your state or pull out of it. Trust me, I'm a politician. I know how stuff like this works."

Ultimately, Major Durant stood no chance against Ves. Even though the seasoned infantry officer should rightfully have the greatest say among the trapped people due to his status as the representative of the government, the man ultimately bowed down to the leader of a private organization.

This was the power of prestige. Ves had become too much of a bigshot to be ignored. The higher his reputation, the less the prevailing rules and conventions fettered him. He could simply say stuff and force everyone into making it happen.

He liked it. He liked it a lot.

The only downside was that he would also have to deal with the negative consequences of becoming more famous, but that came with the territory.

## Chapter 4829 Forceful Parade

Evening had set in the Government District. Enough time had passed for many of the people who previously got caught up in the surprise attack to depart from this damaged and messy warzone.

The streets had been cordoned off while many more military mechs had arrived to defend this crucial location against any further attacks that might ensue.

There was almost no reason for anyone to do so, but it was better to be safe than sorry.

A new development occurred. Plenty of people saw that the mechs of the Larkinson Clan that previously departed the district came back.

They also brought a lot of buddies. Hundreds of mechs from the Larkinson Army brazenly flew from the underground complex of the Cat Nest and flew straight towards the center of the city district in a high-profile fashion!

With expert mechs such as the Everchanger and the Minerva leading the procession, it became clear that the Larkinson Clan wanted to send a serious message!

If that wasn't enough, numerous shuttles emblazoned with the logos of several prominent Davutan news networks started to head towards the Government District as well!

The Larkinsons had invited journalists from each of these news portals to witness a great occasion.

What stood out was that the clan did so without consulting the government!

This caused a lot of alarm among the various leaders of the newly founded colonial federation!

Although the government declined to declare a state of martial law due to a desire to keep this situation from blowing up any further than it already had, a curfew still went into effect.

In such a sensitive time as this, any major disturbances or concentration of troops would prompt the military forces to take action.

It wouldn't be unjustified for the military to start shooting first and ask questions later!

The military mechs patrolling the city did not take action, though. They did not even dare to stand in the way of the Larkinson mechs and ask for an explanation.

The Larkinsons seemed to have expected this response and fearlessly flew forward. They crossed the various districts in the way and barged straight into the Government District that still had the scars of the previous battle!

A lot of bots and work teams worked to register the battle damage, collect any important evidence, rescue any trapped survivors and respectfully remove the bodies of the deceased.

None of the streets looked ready to greet the public again. A lot of bodies still hadn't been cleaned up. The large quantity of beast carcasses were especially troublesome to deal with. Biotech scientists had arrived to examine their organic properties and harvest valuable tissue samples in order to figure out how they became so deadly and hostile towards humans.

A repeat of this tragedy had to be avoided at all cost!

In any case, the government truly did not want to accept visitors to this district while it remained by blood, but the Larkinsons did not care about this priority.

The clan had its own goals.

Although the military did not choose to stop the Larkinson units from moving to the center of the Government District, additional military mechs arrived and flanked the unannounced visitors, but otherwise did nothing else.

The distance to the central plaza was not too great. The mechs in flight easily reached this crucial position.

By now, more powerful mechs had showed up. The Travon Exine piloted by General Ark Larkinson and the Mars piloted by Patriarch Reginald Cross clearly stood out as both of them flew closer to the head of the procession of Larkinson mechs.

The Koi Riser piloted by Saint Megan Roonzin hovered a bit further back. It did not hide its presence, but did not show any intention of moving forward either.

It was General Ark that ultimately spoke for the young colonial federation.

"What are you doing, Commander Ingvar?!" The high-tier expert pilot hissed over a private and encrypted communication channel. "Many different Davutans have attempted to make contact with you and your units, but you ignored all of their calls. Everyone has become a lot more suspicious

and alert than usual. You could have brought great danger to every Larkinson with your stunt! What if anyone decided to pull the trigger and shoot?"

It was at this time that Commander Casella Ingvar finally deigned to respond.

"No one would have shot us. They wouldn't dare. We are the heroes today. Denying us entry will damage the government's relationship with all of the third parties it is trying to befriend. Davute cannot afford to alienate the trading partners it is dependent upon to grow its economy and expand its mech armies."

General Ark Larkinson suffered a headache at the moment.

Though he was a member of the Larkinson Clan, he also wore the hat of a senior military officer of the Colonial Federation of Davute.

Now that both of his affiliations came into conflict with each other, Ark became torn between two loyalties.

His current responsibilities forced him to speak on behalf of the colonial state. He did not want this to happen but felt it was better if he did the talking instead of another representative of the government. Ark could at least make sure that Davute did not treat the Larkinson Clan too unfairly.

"You are making it very difficult for my superiors, commander." Ark responded with a grimace.

"President Yenames Clive is personally urging you and your mechs to return and wait for a missive."

Commander Casella maintained an uncompromising demeanor to reflect the Larkinson Clan's current stance.

"There is no reason for us to talk. Our trapped clansmen are about to come out. We want everyone to know that they did not wait for rescue from your government or from the MTA. They fought their way out and they want everyone to know it. We have won another great victory, General Ark. This is an outcome that should be celebrated rather than obscured."

As a general of the colonial military, Ark Larkinson was not a simple grunt or battlefield commander. He already possessed a good understanding of the goals and the priorities of the state he became obliged to protect.

Holding a public parade was not in the government's best interest, that was for sure. Davute already had a lot of egg on its face. Compounding the humiliation by letting the Larkinsons steal the show would once again diminish the standing of Davute.

Casella and Ark continued to argue against each other. The two remained professional for the most part as they both did their duty to their current masters.

They eventually failed to find a middle ground. The Larkinsons did not budge in their demands and willfully ignored the authority of the state.

The only way that the Davutan military could drive the Larkinson mechs out of the Government District was by taking tangible action, but both sides knew that this would never happen.

This produced an extremely awkward circumstance where the Larkinson Clan openly defied Davute and got away with it! This was a brilliant show of force and demonstrated once again that this eccentric clan punched way above its weight.

General Ark became extremely concerned by these developments.

"What you are doing will have consequences, Casella." He warned. "You are not going to make a lot of friends in Davute with these antics. It is the opposite. We have made many new enemies today. Our Davute Branch will not be able to gain as much assistance from the institutions of the state and my mech division will also encounter a lot more hurdles in the future."

"You are wrong, Ark. What you fear may happen to a varying degree, but it will never be able to exceed all of the fame and goodwill that we have harvested today. Our clan knows what it is doing, and you would know as well if you were not in a hurry to work for the local state."

The Davute Branch may adore General Ark, but the main branch was not as positive.

While there was no doubt that Ark was a Larkinson in his heart and mind, the clan would never divulge too much information to him at his current state!

Ark fully understood that it was his decision that led to this undesirable situation, but he believed it was for the best in the end. He just had to tough it out and hope that the contradictions between the clan as a whole and the colonial state grew more harmonious in the future.

A change suddenly occurred.

Though a visible portal had not formed, the two expert pilots were close enough to sense a disturbance down below.

A bot appeared into view.

It was not unusual for a simple bot to show up in the Government District, but everyone nearby knew that the plaza had been completely empty and deserted at this time!

The investigators and the cleanup crews had focused on processing all of the debris and marks of damage in the central plaza first. Any bots should have long been transferred elsewhere!

The Larkinson mech pilots all knew what this meant.

"The portal is working! Get ready to receive our people!"

The Larkinsons helpfully gave the accompanying journalists a reminder to record what happened next.

A column of Larkinsons spontaneously appeared into view!

It was as if an invisible portal had formed where all of the clansmen could march through and show up in the middle of the Government District.

"That's the patriarch!"

"Ves has returned!"

"He looks much more impressive than before!"

"The rest of our clan has returned as well!"

The people at the front of this column solely consisted of Larkinsons, though the people that followed after that predominantly consisted of the battle-scarred guard troopers of Davute.

The order of the march sent a clear message that it was the Larkinsons that led this parade!

For the clan to be able to convince the Davutan soldiers to play along with this arrangement was already remarkable in itself. Even the civilians of the Larkinson Clan got to walk in front of the Davutan soldiers!

Two prominent individuals led the parade column. Both Ves and Ketis set an easy pace to ensure that the weaker and injured folks could match their pace. It wasn't necessary for the parade to be too neat.

[The hostages have been freed!] A journalist eagerly spoke as more and more people tuned in to the news broadcast. [After a harrowing day of ambushes, tragedies and instances of heroism, we can finally confirm that we are able to announce that the missing VIPs have returned with their lives intact. We cannot independently confirm this news, but the hostages have managed to free themselves rather than getting ransomed.]

Other journalists parroted the information they received from the Larkinson Clan, though they couldn't help but add their own embellishments.

Their words became a lot more enthusiastic once alien captives started to pass through the invisible portal!

Each of them still wore their battle suits because they did not breathe the same air as humans, but it was obvious to everyone that they were not humans!

[Look! The truth has come out! It turned out that Karlach did not plot to attack the citizens of Davute alone, but also colluded with a dastardly group of aliens!]

[Take note of the markings stamped on the armor of the restrained alien captives. Is that... a gold cat head?]

[These alien captives have become the Larkinson Clan's spoils of war! Each and every one of them bears the same symbol. There is nothing that suggests that any of the prisoners have been allocated to the state or other groups. What happened inside this mysterious space where the Larkinsons had to fight and defeat so many aliens?]

Even though a lot of other human survivors exited the portal as well, few people paid any attention to them. They had all turned into background characters today as the Larkinsons had clearly taken the lead this time!

## Chapter 4830 Rambunctious Child

The morning rays of the local star shone through the ultra-dense windows of the bedroom.

These rays lit up the people sleeping in the large-sized bed that occupied a prominent position in the chamber.

Usually, the bed was occupied by two individuals, but this time was different.

After everything that happened just yesterday, the family that had managed to get caught up in several fights all piled up in the same bed and gave in to their exhaustion.

Now that they all enjoyed a good night's rest, the Larkinsons who roused themselves from their slumber no longer experienced as much stress and weariness as before.



Even the harrowing battles that they had witnessed at much closer distances than was safe no longer remained seared in their minds.

The memories had sunk in and the frightening moments no longer haunted them as much.

As Ves slowly opened his eyes, he could feel several weights resting on his body.

The first one was familiar. Lucky had decided to use his chest as his improvised bed. The gem cat had suffered a nasty blow yesterday and still bore his scars.

Ves had no way of repairing his cat. Only Lucky's self-regeneration ability could bring him back to his peak form. That would take time, which meant that the cat would retain his shabby appearance for several weeks.

Lucky didn't suffer as much, though. He was a tough little kitty so he could still bear with his current situation. Much of his damage was confined to his exterior which did not cripple his functionality in any way aside from lowering his defenses.

The other weight on his chest happened to be his middle child. Andraste had gotten absolutely crazy about Ketis' swordsmanship. She wanted to be able to beat up enemies in the exact same fashion when she grew up in the future!

"Keeetisss..." The red-headed girl murmured as she woke up as well. "I wanna master the sword as well..."

Ves made a funny expression. He lifted up his arm to pat his girl on her head. "Hey, Ketis may be strong, but she is not your mother. There are other people you can look up to as well, you know. What about me? What about your mother?"

His daughter pouted. "Hmph! I don't wanna become a mech designer. It's so boring! I have made up my mind, papa. I don't need to become a mech pilot anymore. I'll become an awesome swordmaster like Ketis! Who needs a mech when just a sword will do? It will be perfect!"

"Andraste! This is your future that you are talking about!" Ves hissed as he grew a bit alarmed at her careless talk. "Do not forget that we live in the Age of Mechs. If you want to beat the strongest enemies, then piloting mechs is the best. With your mother and father taking care of all of your mech needs, we will make sure you will always have the strongest and most suitable machine for you. Ketis can pitch in as well if you insist on specializing in swordsmanship. Your chances of becoming a powerful ace pilot is much higher with the help of our proprietary tech. Swordmasters on the other hand are much more miserable. There are no other sword saints aside from the Heavensword Saint, and even he is just a byproduct from what I have heard."

His little girl stayed stubborn. She lifted herself up to a seating position and crossed her arms in imitation of Ketis!

"You're wrong, papa! Ketis is so strong that she will blaze a trail for all swordmasters! She will definitely teach me how to become a sword saint and sword god!"

Ves couldn't help but turn his head towards his wife, who looked just as perplexed as him. It was not easy to temper the outlandish expectations of a young child!

"That is enough, honey." Gloriana eventually spoke up. "You are still a baby. Before you obsess over swordsmanship, you should make sure to keep up with your other studies. Do not think I have overlooked the fact that your grades on your advanced classes have been slipping after you have been training more under Ketis. How do you expect to attend a first-class virtual mech academy if you cannot learn the required math and history classes?"

"I told you already that those classes are boring!"

"No complaints, young lady! I will not allow a child of mine to grow up to become a common thug with a sword such as Venerable Dise. Remember your identity! You are nobler than any other Larkinson. Leadership flows through your blood. If Andraste is to become the future matriarch of our clan, you must ensure that our lineage maintains a firm grip on our power base by becoming its military leader. You should start taking lessons from General Verle as well. You will be inheriting his position once you are ready to take charge."

"I don't want to be a general!" Andraste huffed again. "There is nothing good about being a general. Verle doesn't even really fight anymore. He didn't do anything but sit way behind the frontlines during yesterday's battle! Instead of charging forward and firing his gun at the evil aliens like Ketis or papa, he only stood back and kept bossing people around. He's way less awesome!"

"Meow..." Lucky echoed as he yawned.

Ves groaned. Although he knew he shouldn't take Andraste's childish remarks too seriously, he did not want her to ruin her future opportunities by making rash decisions during a crucial juncture in her life.

He reached out and grabbed his daughter so that he could pull her close to him. "General Verle is a soldier as well. He fights in a different way than other people."

"Let go, papa! I'm not listening!"

It took quite a bit of strength to keep his rambunctious daughter in place. Despite her small size, her designer genes along with other luxurious enhancements had turned her into quite a hellion. Her density and body weight exceeded that of her older sister already!

Ves sighed and hugged his baby daughter tightly. "The reason why we prefer that you become a mech officer as well is because we don't want you to follow the orders of someone outside of our immediate family. No matter how loyal General Verle and even blood relatives such as General Ark may be, they can always turn their backs against us at unexpected times. Rather than allow yourself to leave yourself open to such incidents, it is better for you to grasp the necessary power and become the person who is issuing orders to others."

"I don't need to." Andraste said in a softer tone as she melted in her father's warmth. "If I become as strong as Ketis, people will treat me just like how everyone treats god pilots."

Aurelia decided to back her up. "That's right, sis. Look at how our father and our clan managed to walk all over Davute. We ignored the government's instructions and did not receive any punishment because the officials did not want to make us angry."

"Do not encourage your younger sister like this!" Gloriana pulled back her eldest daughter. "What you are talking about is dangerous. It was far too reckless for our clan to defy the authority of an

entire state. The short-term ego boost that we have received is not commensurate in value to the retaliation that our clan will endure from the institutions of the government."

Ves disagreed with his wife this time. "We got way more than an ego boost out of it, honey. We managed to strengthen our reputation and increase our brand awareness. We already enjoy a lot of advantages from cultivating a reputation for being strong and daring, and our successful attempt in bailing out Davute has earned our clan a massive amount of goodwill from other parties. You just talked to the representatives of those important companies and organizations after the end of yesterday's battle!"

"I did not know you intended to rub Davute's own incompetence back into its face at the time! If I did, I would have stayed by your side and prevented you from letting your bravado get the better of you. Our relations with the new colonial federation will become a lot more estranged as a result!"

Ves shrugged as he continued to cuddle Andraste. "It doesn't matter. I have had it with Davute. As soon as our latest pitstop is over, I am going to take my expeditionary fleet away and never come back. This is the final time I visit this blasted place."

"What?! You can't do that, Ves!"

Gloriana reacted with shock at his words, causing a bit of distress to both Aurelia and Marvaine.

"What's wrong, mama?"

"Miaow...?"

Ves looked as if he had already set his decision. "I am being serious, Gloriana. I already had this idea in mind and this recent incident is the last straw for me. Davute has given me a reminder that we can never really believe in the promises of states and the people that run them. They are entangled in too many affairs and they always want to take advantage of us somehow. Besides, while Davute may be a good place for us for the time being, that will no longer apply in the future."

"What do you mean by that, Ves?"

"We are moving up." Ves smirked. "Not only are we rapidly improving as mech designers, but we are far ahead of our other peers when it comes to obtaining phasewater, alien tech and first-class materials. Our Golden Skull Alliance already possesses the qualifications to hunt down weaker alien warfleets."

"That doesn't mean it is a good idea to fight those dangerous aliens! Do I need to remind you that our previous battles against alien warships had always been hard-fought victories?"

"We can't become complacent, Gloriana, not if we want to reach a higher station." Ves replied. "As long as we continue to upgrade our mechs and starships to quasi-first-class equivalents, we no longer have to bow our heads to ordinary colonial states such as Davute. We can rise above them and do business with them without encountering too many hindrances. It will be a lot more lucrative for us if we continue to roam the new frontier and visit many different places. That has always been the essence of our main fleet. We go wherever we can gain advantages and avoid any places that are detrimental to our interests. Eventually, our fleet will become ready to enter the upper zones."

His wife did not agree with what he said at first, but his last sentence caused her to pause.

Gloriana yearned to become a first-class mech designer. Almost no one in her position would refuse the opportunity to be promoted to the highest class of mech design.

The entry barriers were normally too great for ordinary second-class mech designers. However, with the friendship that Ves had established with Lord Pearian Yorul-Tavik along with the opportunity to send his children to first-class virtual schools, the Larkinson Clan or at least a part of it had a realistic chance to succeed in the transition!

"Forget about Davute. It's not worth your time anymore." Ves continued to persuade her. "Our local branch can continue to maintain and expand our interests here. It will always remain a fallback point in case we encounter a major setback and need to retreat to friendly territory. That is the extent of the support that Davute can provide to us. We shouldn't treat it as our main base because we will ultimately be limited by its second-class circumstances."

"Davute is not completely limited to second-raters, Ves. One of the secrets I have learned while I was socializing with other local socialites is that the founding groups are either first-class organizations or have ties to them. It is not impossible for us to build up a relationship with them and move up this way."

Ves gave his wife a flat stare. "Why would I do that when I am already in the good graces of the Yorul-Tavik Clan?"

"Shouldn't we build up more redundancy? You have always been paranoid about becoming overdependent on the goodwill of a single party."

"Hmm, you are right, but that doesn't invalidate my point. There is no reason to put too much stock in Davute."