

The Mech 5001

Chapter 5001 A Brand New Dawn - CONTEST IN COMMENTS

Ves was happy for helping his mother regain her complete form. He had given her the bones she needed to permanently heal the deep soul injury

that had caused her to remain stuck in a dying state all of this time.

Yet before he could join his mother and sister to celebrate this happy occasion, an event began to unfold in an entirely different galaxy that

completely ruined his mood.

Ves could no longer express care for everything that had happened to his mother today, because his real human self had come under great threat

at this time!

Back in the Red Ocean, Ves stood up from his office chair and looked out of the window of his Royal Mansion.

Although he couldn't quite see it, the phasewater in his blood allowed him to feel that the fabric of space all around him had begun to shake in a

minute fashion.

This was not concerning by itself, but the problem was that it was happening everywhere!

The entire city, the entire planet and most probably the entire star system became affected by an enormous spatial disturbance that originated

from far away.

As he narrowed his eyes and tried his best to attune his senses, he could not figure out where the disturbances came from, only that it was

powerful enough to affect entire regions of space.

Alarms began to ring throughout the city.

"Sir!" Nitaa broke her characteristic silence and stomped forward with her armored form. "The Mech Trade Association and the Common Fleet

Alliance have issued a joint priority declaration. They have both imposed the highest state of emergency in the Red Ocean and the second-highest

state of emergency in the Milky Way."

"What does that mean!"

His chief bodyguard paused for a brief moment in order to look up additional information. "Sir, from now on, every human must unquestionably

obey the instructions of the Big Two without hesitation. Any sign of disobedience is an immediate cause for termination."

Ves widened his eyes!

If the events unfolding in the Red Ocean had deteriorated to this point, then the crisis hatched by the aliens truly posed a humongous threat to all

of the human colonies in this dwarf galaxy!

"What... what have the Big Two instructed us to do?" Ves asked in a voice that betrayed his fear.

"The MTA and CFA have only issued a single global instruction to every human in the Red Ocean. They... have told us to cease all non-essential

work, suspend all travel if possible and flee to the nearest shelter that can be completely enclosed and has a sufficient supply of food and water."

"Anything else?!"

"No, sir. That... is the only order that the mechers and fleeters have issued to us. They require nothing further of us. What is happening,

beyond our power. We cannot make any difference. The best we can do is to stay out of the way to the few that can do so. The last thing we should

do is to become a source of trouble and abuse the state of emergency."

Despair welled up in his mind. Even though he recognized the truth in this statement, it depressed him to an enormous degree that for all of his

growth, he still hadn't come close to reaching the level where he could protect himself from every threat!

Whatever galaxy-wide threat the aliens had just hatched, it was of such great magnitude that perhaps not even the Big Two could resolve!

After all, humanity had only conquered a small portion of the dwarf galaxy. Much of the Red Ocean including its resource-rich galactic center

remained firmly in the hands of the major alien races!

Ves closed his eyes and took a deep breath before he firmed his resolve.

"This is no time to fool around. Let us obey the directive of the Big Two and ride out this storm."

He first summoned the Unending Regalia from the Vault of Eternity.

He planned to upgrade it yet again so that it could allow him to put up a much better fight than the last time he ended up in enemy territory, but

his other projects had occupied too much of his time.

Still, the Unending Regalia was not weak by any means. Ves instantly felt a lot more secure now that he wore his personal suit of combat armor.

Once he made sure he adopted a martial demeanor, he activated an emergency command of his own that enabled him to transmit a high-priority

emergency message that could reach his entire clan.

"Larkinsons!" Ves spoke with a stern expression. "You should have all heard about the state of emergency declared by the Big Two. I have no more

answers than any of you, but that is not important. A dangerous change is about to sweep the dwarf galaxy, and since we are currently in it, we will

all be affected by what the aliens are planning to do. There is no escape. We do not have the time to evacuate back to the Milky Way, and doing so

will violate the direct orders issued from above."

His words dispelled any notion about pulling out of Davute and flying all the way back to Bridgehead One to squeeze through the greater

beyonder gate.

"Stay strong, clansmen." Ves continued. "This is no time for our clan to be at our worst. Do your part in presenting the best of ourselves. I am

echoing the orders issued by the Big Two. I implore all of you to flee to the nearest shelter, preferably the ones built by our clan underneath the

Cat Nest. If you are stationed on any of our ships in space, then I recommend you put the vessels on lockdown and retreat to the most appropriate

shelters. Follow the emergency protocols and obey the instructions of your superiors. Survive. Remain patient. Avoid panic. Do what you can to

help yourself and your fellow Larkinson. Good luck."

This was all Ves could do to reassure his clansmen and hurry them to their shelters.

Before Ves left his office, he gazed up at the skies through the window and tried to deduce more information from what was happening.

The galactic net and all of the news portals were completely useless. Nobody knew what was going on, and even if a few people happened to make

the right guess, their opinions were drowned in a deluge of panic and hysteria!

This was why Ves tried to figure out the truth himself.

"Strange."

As a phase lord, if only a weak one, he was faintly able to get in touch with the galaxy-wide spatial disturbances.

He was too weak to do anything else, though, but he happened to know a certain design spirit that could do more.

"Phase King! Lend me a hand!"

As Ves opened up his mind towards the alien design spirit, his spatial awareness boosted to a much greater height!

The vague phasewater ripples that were previously too subtle for him to register properly had now become a lot more obvious!

There was a strange rhythm in the spatial disturbances that gave him the illusion of a million whales singing in harmony.

The Phase King's incredibly high sensitivity and affinity towards phasewater enabled him to glean a lot more clues from what was happening in space.

First, the effect was generated all around the Red Ocean. The reason why this was possible was because a bunch of extremely powerful phase

whales had combined their forces and began to exert their power at different points in space!

Somehow, they not only managed to coordinate their actions in perfect synchronicity, but also managed to amplify their spatial powers through unknown but undoubtedly large-scale means.

Their spatial disturbances were able to reach further and wider than anything they could accomplish on their own!

This wasn't the extent of the alien master plan.

The original spatial disturbances weren't enough to reach across the entire Red Ocean.

However, other phase whales and phase lords could pitch in by attuning themselves to the ripples of space and act as a relay to amplify the signal

in their local regions of space!

The huge amount of native gods spread throughout the dwarf galaxy directly strengthened this grand move beyond all proportions!

If not for the assistance of many millions of phase whales and phase lords, it was impossible for the alien's grand design to encompass so many light-years of space!

The only caveat was that the amplification was not as strong in the most outer regions of the Red Ocean. Not enough native gods resided in these

remote places, and the few that did could not affect every possible patch of space.

It was enough!

Ves understood that the Krakatoa Middle Zone was affected in its totality. The Phase King saw no possible way to escape this entire trap!

The only action that the design spirit could do was to 'join' the choir and assist the alien efforts.

"Don't do anything stupid! Ves immediately warned the whale. Do your best to protect yourself and your subjects. I don't know how this alien super-

move will affect your little kingdom, but you should hunker down just to be sure!"

Ves issued the same warning to all of his other design spirits. He had a feeling that whatever the aliens were doing would not fly past these entities either!

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It was only then that he chose to retreat.

There was no need for him to take the normal route. The Royal Mansion was connected to a secret tunnel that led straight into the strongest and most secure doomsday vault underneath the Cat Nest.

As he and his bodyguards descended deep underground, they eventually entered a solid chamber that was surrounded by metal walls that were thick enough to offer battleship-grade protection.

It had cost a massive amount of resources to build such a place, but Ves never felt more grateful about his decision to invest so much in a protective measure that might never be put to use if not for the current emergency.

"Papa! You're here!"

"I'm scared, papa!"

"Miaaaaow!"

The vault could easily accommodate hundreds of the most important members of the Larkinson Clan. It was at roughly 30 percent capacity by the time Ves arrived.

He ignored the urgent inquiries of General Verle and Chief Minister Abigail Evern and moved straight to his wife and children.

Each of them had already changed into their protective suits, though Ves was not really satisfied with the level of protection that they offered.

At least their children were wearing their first-class shield generators that he had bought for them in the past.

Aurelia, Andraste and Marvaine briefly left their mother's side in order to hug Ves' solid form.

"It's alright, children. Your father is here. Nothing will happen to you while I am here. We will all be safe."

"Meow meow."

Miaow.

The two cats puffed themselves up as if to say that they could protect the children as well!

"Do you know what is happening, Ves?" Gloriana asked as she moved closer.

Ves shook his head. "Nope. I have a few guesses, but it won't change anything. I think that this won't last too long, though. The aliens are expending such an enormous effort that they are probably expending massive amounts of energy at an unsustainable rate."

The Phase King kept track of the spatial disturbances and sensed that it was rising to a crescendo.

At this time, even Ves could feel as if he could join the choir in his own power!

"Just stay calm, okay? I don't think the phase whales are attempting to destroy their entire dwarf galaxy... I think."

"YOU THINK!?"

Ves ignored the rising concern of his wife and turned around to check how his clan and everyone was faring.

The data feeds showed that the vast majority of his clansmen had entered their designated shelters. The few Larkinsons left outside had undertaken various essential duties such as operating the control centers and piloting the mechs assigned to defend the Cat Nest.

All of the expert pilots of the Larkinson Clan had chosen to deploy around the Cat Nest or the expeditionary fleet in orbit depending on where they were stationed.

Even Venerable Jannzi Larkinson and Venerable Zimro Belson had opted to hop inside the cockpits of their new mechs and activate them straight away!

In this deepest state of emergency, the two expert pilots had chosen to put their trust in their new and largely untested machines rather than the sturdy shelters.

Ves quickly activated a communication channel to both the Dullahan Project and the Phobos!

"Keep your mechs in place! Don't emerge on the surface unless I give the orders or until you deem it necessary to deploy outside. I don't know what is about to happen, but please do not expose our new trump cards prematurely, alright?"

"Roger that, Ves." Jannzi answered.

"I can deploy outside without anyone taking notice if I activate the stealth system." Zimro spoke.

"Hmmm... the stealth capabilities of your Phobos haven't been tested as of yet. Let's not take any chances. Remain underground unless the situation changes, have I made myself clear?"

"Yes... sir."

Ves briefly checked with the state of his fleet. Fortunately, most of his spacers were consummate professionals who knew exactly what they needed to do in the outbreak of a crisis.

His allies were doing fairly good as well. The Glory Seekers and the Cross Clan had experienced so many dangers alongside the Larkinson Clan that their emergency responses were all quick and efficient.

The recently joined Adelaide Third Fleet and the Boojay Family were a bit slower to complete their emergency measures, but they were not that bad compared to other pioneering groups.

As for the rest of the people and organizations in Davute... they were a mixed bag at best. Rioting had already erupted in a couple of cities while masses of confused civilians did not know what to do after they learned about the state of emergency that dropped out of the blue.

None of this mattered to Ves. He and his clan had already did everything they could.

Powerful shield generators came to life. The Cat Nest became surrounded by several layers of energy shields. This was the final guarantee that could save the main base of the Larkinson Clan on this planet from a crashing asteroid or starship.

Many people across the Red Ocean were taking shelter in their own way.

Patriarch Reginald for example chose to pilot his Mars and fly high in the skies as if daring for the aliens to take a shot!

"COME AT ME, YOU FILTHY ALIENS! I AM NOT AFRAID!"

Master Benedict Cortez made the much more sensible choice of retreating to an underground shelter that was only moderately less defensible than the Larkinson Clan's best vault.

He let out a tired breath as he monitored the situation. "Is there no place in the cosmos where I can find peace?"

Many other people throughout Davute took shelter as well. Even President Yenames Clive had been evacuated from his floating palace so that he could take shelter in the Davute Pocket Space that his state had recently taken over!

"Are you sure that it is wise to hide inside a pocket space when the aliens are in the process of disturbing the space around us?" The man questioned his protectors.

"If anything happens to you, the vice-president shall take over your office." Madame Reina Kernsk remarked.

Many more humans across the new frontier made their own preparations.

On the planet of New Scimitar IV, Matriarch Xiaphna Wodin, Constance Wodin, Amarintha Wodin, Kellandra Wodin and many other members of the Wodin Dynasty had retreated to several deep shelters.

Despite the distressing situation, none of the Hexers gave in to their despair!

Compared to the disastrous fall of their original home state, the latest emergency did not sound so bad.

Many of the Hexers who had entered the shelters spontaneously fell to their knees and began to pray to the Supreme Mother.

"Please, oh great Mother, give us your blessing and protect us from the threat posed by the aliens and the Fridaymen."

Far away in an entirely different zone, the Polymath remained impassive as she remained rooted in her base of operations.

Her mind was connected to a vast network that enabled her to keep track of a lot of developments and issue many different instructions.

At no point did she ever stop doing what she could to make this better for the humans in the Red Ocean!

As for Divine Irene Mox who had only recently arrived in the Red Ocean, she could only growl impatiently as her Ragnarök flew towards the nearest source of disturbance.

It was a pity that it would take too long for her god mech to arrive and make any difference!

"I SHOULD HAVE COME SOONER AND BLOWN ALL OF THOSE PHASE WHALES INTO PIECES." She growled.

As the people of the Red Ocean continued to get ready for what was about to come, the humans who were in the Milky Way grew concerned as well.

Many of their friends and families had relocated to the new frontier! To find out that a danger had arisen that would have a massive effect on the dwarf galaxy distressed them as well!

Of course, many of the people left behind in the old galaxy also felt incredibly grateful that they hadn't acted impulsively.

Back inside the strongest vault of the Larkinson Clan, Ves suddenly looked up as he sensed a drastic change in the fabric of space.

"IT'S HAPPENING!" Ves shouted in warning just seconds before the great event took place!

Far away from Davute, twenty-seven primary Tide Stations and an unknown amount of phase whales and phase lords all exerted their power in total harmony!

Each and every piece of phasewater in the Red Ocean activated to a small extent.

This included the minute concentration of phasewater in Ves' bloodstream!

His eyes widened as he could feel as if he was connected to a grand web that the native aliens had weaved throughout the entirety of the Red Ocean!

"AHHH!" He screamed as he felt as if the web had ripped a lot of energy from him all of a sudden!

"AAAAAAAHH!"

Everyone else screamed as they felt as if they were pushed through a blender!

Space itself seemed to convulse and vomit for a couple of seconds before everything turned stable again!

The lights briefly flickered as the various electronic systems received various degrees of disturbances.

Though all of the systems appeared to be working fine, the same could not be said for all of the people that had just lived through a violent spatial event of massive proportions!

"Ughh..."

Ves groaned and tried his best to shake off his abrupt pain and weariness. "Situation report... I need a situation report! What is going on? Did anyone get killed!"

It took half a minute before the first reports came in. The mech pilots outside had experienced similar disturbances, but otherwise noted that everything seemed fine."

Ves could feel that the spatial disturbances had completely come to an end. The Phase King concurred as well, but he began to report a lot of changes that he couldn't immediately decipher.

"Ah, shut up, please!" Ves groaned as he held his head in pain.

The other design spirits started to report various changes as well! They were greatly affected by what the phase whales had just pulled!

Some of the messages sounded so alarming to Ves that he immediately wanted to gain confirmation!

"Give me a feed of the surface!"

A projection appeared before him that showed the Cat Nest and its surroundings.

Ves controlled the view so that it pointed upwards. The blue skies looked as normal as ever. No flaming asteroids or deranged phase whales were descending from orbit.

His eyes started to narrow as he noticed that the skies had taken on a faint golden cast. It was as if time had advanced to the evening, which wasn't supposed to be the case!

"Give me a feed... of our fleet up in orbit."

The projection changed to show a panoramic view of the ships of the Larkinson Clan.

Each of them looked fine and untouched, which made Ves feel relieved. His fleet was his most important base and his guarantee that he could survive anything the aliens pulled off this time.

Yet as his gaze immediately shifted to the surroundings, his Jutland organ almost froze.

"Where... is the red?"

Gloriana slowly shuffled to his side. "It... is gone. There is no red anymore. It's... gold now. Everything is gold and yellow like the star of the Sol System."

More and more people who accessed similar feeds became completely gobsmacked by the sight.

The Red Ocean was called this way because of the reddish nebulae and cosmic dust that were ubiquitous throughout the dwarf galaxy!

The red space junk hadn't actually disappeared. Numerous sensors showed that they were still present and unchanged.

The difference was that a more powerful light source had emerged that had overpowered the color that had given the Red Ocean its name!

Ves narrowed his eyes and began to manipulate the sensor controls. He shifted the view in another direction and employed a few filters that clarified a few details.

"That... is not the Milky Way." He stated.

The familial disc-shaped galaxy that had always been a relatively small but noticeable presence in the skies of the Red Ocean had disappeared!

In its place was a considerably larger and much more luminous yellow globe!

The size and power of this globe was so great that it had changed the background color of the Red Ocean itself!

Ves quickly noticed another peculiarity and began to zoom in. The projected view continually magnified until it spotted a strong jet of matter coursing through what appeared to be thousands of light-years of space.

This powerful jet was one of the reasons why the Red Ocean had become engulfed in so much foreign radiation!

Already the strong background radiation that previously coursed through empty space was beginning to collide against the starships, planets, moons and other objects of the Red Ocean!

Though the radiation did not appear to be strong enough to overwhelm most forms of radiation shielding, who knew whether that was true.

The new space elements could produce all kinds of harmful effects to humans and their technology!

He already came to the conclusion that everything had changed. Life as he knew it could never proceed according to the previous pattern.

"What... is that, Ves?" Gloriana asked, though her voice betrayed that she may have already guessed the frightening answer to her question.

"If I am not mistaken... that is the relativistic jet of matter ejected by a supermassive black hole." Ves slowly replied. "It spans over 5000 light-years I think... I know where we are now. This jet along with that huge spherical golden galaxy matches the description of Messier 87. It is one of the larger galaxies that humanity has discovered in space, and also holds one of the heaviest supermassive black holes that our astronomers have discovered. This galaxy is supposed to be a lot further away from the Red Ocean than now, though. We should normally be separated from it by over 50 million light-years. For Messier 87 to appear too large and prominent, it can only mean one thing."

Not just Gloriana, but every other Larkinson in the vault opened their ears to what their patriarch was about to say next!

Ves' face turned incredibly ugly at this point!

"The indigenous aliens... somehow teleported the entire Red Ocean and everyone inside it over 50 million light-years away. This dwarf galaxy has completely left the neighborhood of our home galaxy and has fallen into orbit of Messier 87, a supergiant elliptical galaxy located in the center of the Virgo Cluster!"

Chapter 5002. The Light of Realization

A new dawn arose in the Red Ocean.

This was a day that would live on in history of the human race as well as all of the indigenous alien races of the displaced dwarf galaxy.

Anyone residing in a starship only had to look out a window to figure out that everything had changed!

For the first time since the Red Ocean's emergence, its characteristic red cast that inspired its human name had become overpowered by the dawn of an enormous galaxy!

It was like a distant but ever-present sun, one that one day suddenly decided to illuminate the entire Red Ocean!

However, it was not that the sun arrived next to the Red Ocean, but that the Red Ocean had suddenly been transported next to a galaxy that was unimaginably far away!

To the humans who immigrated to the new frontier in pursuit of new opportunities, what happened was nothing less than a calamity!

The galaxy-wide transition event may have only lasted an instant, but the consequences were nothing less than devastating!

As the news slowly spread across the slice of the dwarf galaxy that the human race managed to conquer, many colonists could not process the news.

The Larkinsons who had retreated into their vaults grew numb and silent as the event broke their cognition.

No matter how smart they were or how much they have experienced in their lives, a galactic displacement event was so massive that it was never even used as the basis of a plot in the incredibly diverse entertainment industry.

Not even the script writers were mad enough to come up with such a ludicrous idea!

"How are the phase whales able to teleport an entire galaxy, if only a small one, 50 million light-years away! This is impossible! The energy requirements are enormous and the quantity of phasewater that is needed to teleport every single asteroid, moon, planet, star and black hole should exceed the estimated quantity that is in the possession of the aliens! There is no way the indigenous aliens managed to transport every single particle of dust without breaking anything!"

"The galactic net is malfunctioning! I can't connect to my relatives back in the old galaxy anymore. The connections aren't going through!"

"It's not just the Milky Way that we have lost contact with. I can't call my cousin who is working in a colony in the Magair Middle Zone either!"

"Huh? The messages that I have sent to a supplier in the Torald Middle Zone are still going through. Hey, the Comm Consortium just sent us a notification."

"What did they say?"

"The quantum communication nodes connected to the Milky Way are no longer working, but the ones that are connected to other nodes in the Red Ocean are still doing fine. The consortium's engineers are working as quickly as possible to reconfigure the networks so that we can form a fully working network across the new frontier."

The implications of losing direct communications with the Milky Way were serious and profound.

Ever since humanity first set foot in the Red Ocean, many people had gotten used to the notion that their home galaxy was not as far away as it appeared on the maps.

Sure, the Red Ocean orbited the Milky Way at a distance of several hundred thousand light-years, but with the addition of an easily accessible communications network that could establish instant communications between the two, it was easy for the colonists to remain in touch with the people who stayed behind in the old galaxy!

That illusion broke with the breaking of all quantum communication nodes that were connected to paired nodes located in another galaxy.

Perhaps the humans of the Milky Way came to the conclusion that the phase whales had wiped out the Red Ocean in its entirety!

If no form of communications could be established between the humans spread across the two galaxies, then they would no longer be able to maintain a single unified civilization!

The humans of the Milky Way were probably not that greatly affected by the galactic displacement event.

They may have lost a lot of their best and brightest with the disappearance of the Red Ocean, but their core strength and foundation still remained enough to maintain their dominion over their home galaxy!

As for the humans of the Red Ocean, their situation had become a lot more dire!

Many people on Davute and beyond already began to panic now that they had lost the 'big brother' that they could always turn to if they ever- needed help in solving their problems in the Red Ocean!

"Damnit, this is a disaster!" Ves uttered as soon as he thought of this specific scenario.

"Waaaaaaaaa!" Marvaine cried as he became affected by unfolding panic and confusion.

"Meeeeooooow." Lucky tried his best to console the little boy, but even his cutest act failed to make the young Larkinson feel reassured!

Even Andraste devolved into a scared little girl in these uncertain times!

"Mama, I'm scared! People are saying that we are left all alone. Is that true?!"

Gloriana had already bent down to embrace Aurelia. She reached out and hugged her second daughter as well.

"Shhh. It's okay, my babies. Nothing will happen. So what if our galaxy has moved to another cosmic neighborhood? We didn't need the Milky Way anyway. The foundation of the Larkinsons and the Hexers is based entirely in our current galaxy. The Fridaymen might have reason to be scared of losing their old galaxy backers, but we will remain as strong as ever before!"

The Larkinsons might actually be able to make it through this unprecedented crisis without suffering much actual damage, but the same could not be said for many other parties!

For example, within a fortress built inside the secure Davute Pocket Space that thankfully remained unchanged, a certain federal president was trying his best to maintain his composure!

Yenames Clive was one of the smartest and well-educated member of the Clive Consortium of his generation. He had not only beaten many of his fellow Clives into securing the presidency of an entire colonial state, but also managed to outmaneuver numerous excellent candidates put forth by the other founders of Davute!

Yet as the truth slowly began to dawn on his administration, he realized that nothing could have prepared him to confront a crisis of this magnitude!

Slam!

His chief of staff forcibly smacked a desk with her palm!

"Sir! This is no time for you to lose control over yourself!" Reina Kernsk shouted at him. "The consequences are massive, and our state has most definitely lost our greatest backing, but this is not the time to address these affairs. We need you to take charge and keep our citizens from making our situation worse!"

The president quickly pulled his mind out of all of the disastrous consequences to his state as well as his own personal condition. Kernsk was right. The last thing that anyone could afford was people going crazy due to the events that had just taken place!

"Activate the most appropriate emergency response plan." The president instructed as he forcibly maintained a state of cold rationality. "Instruct the Planetary Guard to go out at full force. Mobilize our military forces as well and make sure they reassure our citizens that we still possess the might to see through the coming dangers."

"Good idea, sir. A show of strength is the crudest but also the most straightforward method of assuring the concerns of our people. Not everyone will respond well to them, however. The reactions of the citizens are bound to be unpredictable."

President Yenames Clive finally regained his demeanor as the head of his government. "Then tell the Planetary Guard to do their work and pacify any uncontrolled elements. We are still in the highest state of emergency."

"The Big Two will probably lower it within the next 48 hours. Our displaced and isolated society cannot remain frozen for too long." The chief of staff predicted.

"Stability is more important than prosperity, at least for the time being. We should gradually return to a state of normalcy, but it is critical to keep our citizens preoccupied and our mechs out in force."

The Colonial Federation of Davute moved quickly to control its own territories.

Several hours after the native aliens had successfully managed to teleport the Red Ocean to the vicinity of Messier 87, millions if not billions of humans spread across the new frontier gave in to their panic!

"We're doomed! We are all going to die!" A security officer yelled as he stepped out of the armory and promptly began to open fire at any crew members who were in the vicinity! "Humanity in this galaxy will go extinct! If the local aliens won't wipe us all out, then the ones from M87 will come and finish the job! We can't fight against an entire super-galaxy!"

Although the average quality of humans in the Red Ocean was a bit higher than average, there were plenty of unstable and weak-willed individuals who broke down and started to behave irrationally in the face of the overpowering pressure of the truth!

·c0m More and more alarming information had begun to proliferate across the fractured galactic net.

The Great Severing affected more than just the intergalactic quantum communication node connections between the two galaxies.

A more alarming piece of news had filtered through!

The greater beyonder gate located in the Bridgehead One System could no longer establish a connection with its corresponding copy located in the Maryun Ultima System!

In other words, the only known gate that could lead the humans of the Red Ocean back to their old and familiar home galaxy became inoperable! The galactic displacement event had turned one of the most powerful devices of human civilization into a gigantic and exorbitant piece of space junk!

So long as this orphaned gate could not generate a wormhole with a comparable ring-shaped construct, it would always serve as a reminder to the displaced humans that they had become lost and abandoned sons!

This explosive revelation was the final confirmation that a certain group of people needed to go bonkers!

"Have you gone crazy, captain!? Open up this hatch!"

The deranged starship captain that had forcibly taken over the helm of his own ship refused to listen to his crew!

"It's pointless, Harry! We're all doomed! We are all going to die!"

"What are you talking about?! We're humans! We rose up from humble beginnings on Old Earth and managed to conquer half of the Milky Way by the time we took a break!"

"That's different! I studied our civilization's history as well as you, and the only reason why we managed to win over the aliens back then was because they all underestimated us weak humans. This won't happen again! The natives of the Red Ocean have all learned of our might, so they conspired to cut us off from our home galaxy before they start an offensive that will make us extinct!"

"Then we will die trying, sir! Don't be a pussy! If you want to be a coward and leave this fight early, then at least give us the courtesy of letting us choose our own way out. You don't have to drag us all down with your ship!"

"I AM SAVING YOU ALL, HARRY! BETTER TO DIE A CLEAN DEATH THAN TO BECOME THE PLAYTHINGS OF VENGEFUL ALIENS! FOR HUMANITY!"

The cargo vessel continued to fall from orbit before crashing straight into a colony settlement!

Only a fraction of the 200,000 recently migrated humans survived this act of madness!

The small colony was still too poor and underdeveloped to afford greater protection, and its shelters were way too inadequate to protect the sheltering colonists from a kinetic strike of this magnitude!

Similar events happened in many other star systems. From the lower zones and all the way into the upper zones, many people with poor psychological qualities acted as if they were crown terrorists who had been activated a few years too late!

The forces of the Big Two as well as the many established powers that found themselves stuck in this isolated dwarf galaxy struggled to maintain order in this new and horrific reality.

The new dawn of Messier 87 continued to cast an ominous light across the humans who had all found themselves cut off from the greater human civilization.

Although opinions about the immediate consequences of this event remained mixed on this chaotic first day, a lot of humans managed to come to a consensus on one particular matter.

The Age of Mechs had come to an abrupt and catastrophic end!

Chapter 5003 Foreign Environment

Many displaced humans became convinced that the end times had arrived for their people!

Perhaps their brothers and sisters who were fortunately enough to remain In the Milky Way had little to worry about, but It was a completely different story to the unlucky victims of a grand alien plot!

Doom had come to the humans who had become orphaned from their main civilization without any warning or preparation!

Far too many people began to act out as their minds became completely enthralled by the depths of their own Imagination.

Every society had its fair share of pessimists and trigger-happy idiots, and the life-changing events that took place today had pushed them over the edge!

Spontaneous riots and attacks erupted across human space In the new frontier.

Davute was no exception to this rule. Both Its outlying colonies and Its densely populated port system quickly turned chaotic as too many people ignored the orders issued by several different authorities.

It was already bad enough if ordinary people left their shelters and discharged their firearms on the streets.

The true threats from the crazies that had access to serious hardware!

Power plant engineers deliberately attempted to blow up a reactor!

Spacers hijacked the ships they were serving upon so that they could turn large metal vessels into suicide weapons!

Mech pilots hopped Into their cockpits, only to use their powerful machines to destroy their communities as opposed to protecting them from harm!

The chaos that erupted in the Davute System happened to be a bit more severe than usual.

As a port system, Davute attracted a large number of foreigners. These traders or visitors had little to no foundation In the colonial state and felt much more alienated than the residents who invested in their new homes.

Tourists shed all of their anti-gravity clothing before promptly throwing themselves from the floating structures.

Mercenary mechs In space began to open fire on every nearby starship.

Opportunists took advantage of the momentary chaos to settle their private vendettas or raid a couple of stores!

The situation In Kotor City and many other settlements continued to deteriorate!

However, the authorities were quick to respond.

The Planetary Guard and much of the armed forces consisted of highly professional servicemen. Their intensive training had increased their psychological fortitude.

Even if the galaxy was falling apart around them, they would still remain steady and follow their orders to the end!

The law enforcement mechs of the Planetary Guard moved to resolve as many incidents as possible. The Pacifier model that was Jointly developed and sold by the Living Mech Corporation and Voiken Industries happened to do an excellent Job at calming down the troublemakers!

Unfortunately, most cities in Davute and the rest of the surrounding middle zones did not field enough of them to control the entire population.

The Federal Military of Davute quickly had to deploy its own forces in order to cover all of the remaining ground!

Although the military mech pilots did not have any great ways to resolve violent incidents other than employing a lot of violence themselves, they had no other choice.

Their orders were extremely clear! Anyone who stirred up trouble at this time had to be controlled or eliminated as quickly as possible!

"Do the authorities need any assistance?" Ves asked General Verle as both of them had moved to an underground command center. "We've got thousands of mechs at our disposal. This is not the time for us to let our grievances with the government get in the way of survival."

The general shook his head. "We do not need to reinforce the government troops for the time being. Davute already has enough mechs to cover most neighborhoods. Don't forget that the colonial state had been building up for war since the day it was founded. The Federal Military is oversized and has especially stationed many of its mech divisions in this port system. The 77th Warborn led by General Ark Larkinson have also deployed their mechs in force."

"I see."

Due to this and many other reasons, the situation in Davute remained under control for the most part.

Other regions had it worse. The absence of Pacifier mechs that could quickly and conveniently sap the madness from lots of unstable individuals made it a lot harder to restore order!

The Pacifiers weren't sold in the Upper Zones and the Lower Zones of the Red Ocean. This meant that the authorities of many planets had to exert a lot more effort in order to regain control over the settlements and the space lanes!

Ves did not really care about what happened outside of Davute at the moment. He was on the verge of becoming overwhelmed by a flood of alarming information and developments, so he constantly had to rein in his thoughts and focus on the more immediate issues.

"Has the Big Two sent any new transmissions as of yet?!" Ves asked as he continued to coordinate the Larkinson Clan's response in the command center.

Neither he nor anyone else had taken off their protective suits. The highest state of emergency was still in effect, and even if the situation calmed down a bit, they would still keep up their guard for a long time!

"The MTA and the CFA have yet to make any further declarations, but word on the street is that they will make a massive announcement within 24 hours." Gavin Neumann responded. "The situation is messy behind the scenes as well. The mechs and the fleeters are probably arguing about what to do. I don't think either of them have made up their minds on their proposed course of action. No one could have planned for this contingency. It will take time for the leaders to come to a reluctant and uneasy consensus."

That sounded about right to Ves. The MTA was divided into several factions and the CFA was no different. There was no way that all of those powerful leaders at the top would unite all of a sudden!

In fact, it was probably the opposite! The abrupt breakdown of the intergalactic governance structure meant that a lot of controlling and moderating institutions could no longer restrain the leading figures in the Red Ocean!

"I hope the Big Two settle their differences quickly." Ves muttered. "The people need to hear from them. If not, humanity in the Red Ocean may very well splinter and fracture into pieces."

This would be an even greater calamity for everyone!

As much as Ves disliked the restrictions imposed by the MTA and the CFA, they were the only organizations capable of enforcing order in the new frontier.

As the unfolding chaos erupting in many human-occupied star systems just showed, their society could not do without order!

Time passed by. Kotor City only briefly became beset by flames before the authorities deployed their mechs in force and came down hard on the troublemakers.

The Cat Nest continued to remain undisturbed as its excellent defenses and large mech garrison deterred many people from even looking in its direction!

The expeditionary fleet up in orbit was in a more precarious state. Despite its distance from other fleets and starships, there was no cover in space.

Any mech with a precise enough ranged weapon could open fire on the vulnerable starships of the Larkinson Clan and its allies!

In order to prevent the ships from being used as target practice, the crews had been instructed to start moving around and increase their distance from third parties.

Whether these measures made a difference or not, the expeditionary fleet was spared from getting attacked.

Once Ves became more assured that the security situation of the Larkinson Clan remained stable, he cautiously started to investigate the greater situation.

The fractured galactic net continued to get flooded with nonsense, but the Black Cats had been busy with trying to separate truth from hysterical lies.

"It is a lot more difficult to distinguish one from the other." Calabast's projection reported to Ves.

"So many crazy events took place that the more reasonable stories are more likely to be false. There are many different parties that want to pretend they have the situation under control. Not every place has weathered this day as well as Davute."

Ves sighed. "Humanity in the Red Ocean is not taking this well at all. We are already starting to fall apart on the first day!"

"I don't think it will be as bad as you think." Calabast responded. "Too many people must vent our emotions one way or another. Once the next day has arrived, I think that many of us will sober up and begin to think about what we must do from here. This is the time where the Big Two will likely make a historic announcement. That is when the displaced humans are most receptive to their message."

It made sense, Ves supposed. He just wished that this could happen without so many people giving in to their despair.

"Is there any developments that you think I should be informed about?" He asked.

"There are several, Ves. The first is that the Planetary Guard units throughout the new frontier have all made the same reports. They have noted that the glows of the Pacifier mechs have become a little more effective than expected. Their maximum range has grown and their ability to calm down rabid individuals have also improved."

Ves minutely widened his eyes.

"General Verle."

"Yes, sir?"

"Have our men reported any changes with regards to their living mechs?"

"I was Just about to bring that up, sir." The middle-aged man said with a hint of perplexity on his face. "More and more troops are sharing their doubts about this matter. They feel that their living mechs have become... a little more alive than before. Their glows have also grown stronger, though not every mech pilot is sensitive enough to tell the difference."

Ves fell into thought. "I see. Keep track of this matter. Living mechs are the foundation of our defense. We cannot afford to overlook any changes to their effective performance. Try and find out whether the changes are uniform or variable among the different living mechs."

"Will do, sir. We shall endeavor to collect as much data as possible."

He experienced a lot of unusual changes after the mass displacement event. He initially thought that he was Just feeling a bit woozy from getting teleported 50 million light-years away, but if other spiritual entitles got affected in a similar fashion, then a lot more was going on than he initially assumed!

"Calabast."

"What is it, Ves?"

"We need to collect as much environmental data as possible." Ves stated. "Activate all of the sensor systems of the Blinding Banshee and investigate the state of the surrounding space. I want access to that data so that I can check for certain stuff."

The spymaster frowned but nodded. "We can do that. What do you want to study in particular?"

"I need the Blinding Banshee to take an especially close look at the effect that Messier 87 has on the local environment. The supergiant galaxy is the largest in the Virgo Cluster. Our Red Ocean has dropped so close to it that we have all become exposed to new forms of radiation and other environmental factors."

Calabast immediately grew concerned. "Are you suspecting that we are all being affected by unknown and potentially dangerous radiation?"

"I can't rule anything out at this point. We are lacking a lot of information right now, so get to work and start collecting all of that sensor data."

As Calabast's projection soon faded away, Ves turned his attention Inward.

Bllnky possessed a high degree of sensitivity towards spiritual energy. The companion spirit sensed a gradual change in the environment, one that had been gradually growing stronger over time.

Although Ves needed to collect a lot more data to be certain, he already formed a preliminary guess of what was happening.

He turned his head until he faced the overall direction of Messier 87.

Somehow, the interstellar environment of this large and powerful galaxy was a lot more friendly towards spiritual energy and anything related to it! This had huge implications for every energy-based life form!

Chapter 5004 Mortal Limitations

Compared to all of the humans trapped in a Red Ocean that was frantically looking for answers, Ves possessed several advantages over others.

He was probably one of the rare individuals that still maintained an intact real-time communication channel with the Milky Way!

Despite the enormous distance that separated humanity's home galaxy from its lost satellite galaxy, the bond between Ves and Veronica transcended mortal limitations!

Ves and Veronica might appear like two separate individuals who were completely different from each other, but they were actually the 'same' person.

The rules governing avatars were a bit confusing and illogical to Ves. He could not fathom why he and his cyborg cat avatar could still maintain their connection under the circumstances.

Fortunately, Veronica happened to be in the presence of a highly knowledgeable spiritual sorcerer, one that had just resurrected from the dead to boot!

"Oh, Ves." The goddess-like matron sighed as she took hold of the cyborg cat and stroked the feline's metallic back. "I am so sorry for what has happened to your human side. I deeply want to be there with you. As it is, there is not much I can do to protect you. I may have gained the power of an immortal goddess and stolen a part of the authority of the Water Scroll, but even I cannot bridge a divide that is 50 million light-years wide."

Helena weakly smiled. "I ley. You should look on the bright side, Ves. At least the Five Scrolls Compact cannot threaten you anymore. If the Big Two are unable to return the greater beyonder gates to working condition, then no one in the Milky Way can relocate to the Red Ocean and back. This is much more beneficial for you than for other humans."

Veronica cheered up a bit. "I guess you're right, but we Red Oceaners have greater threats to contend with now. We have lost the protective umbrella of our main civilization, which means that we have become heavily outnumbered and probably outgunned in a completely alien environment. The native aliens of the Red Ocean are already bad enough. The ones from M87 are undoubtedly worse! The supergiant galaxy is much more energetic and possesses a much greater quantity and concentration of valuable resources! Tills kind of environment tends to breed much stronger alien races!"

The advanced civilizations of the Milky Way possessed a dominant advantage over the less developed civilizations of the Red Ocean.

That was good news for the humans who came from the former and bad news for the aliens who originate from the latter.

However, the scheme hatched by the phase whales had turned much of this reality on its head!

Tlie displaced humans had completely lost access to their foundation in the Milky Way.

Perhaps the Isolated Big Two along with enterprising human pioneers maintained enough superiority to conquer the Red Ocean, but what then?

Humanity also needed to guard against the alien civilizations that had most certainly thrived under the much richer conditions of Messier 87!

Helena summed up humanity's predicament in the lost Red Ocean nicely.

"To the aliens of Messier 87, there are no differences between the humans and the locals of the Red Ocean. As far as they are concerned, humans are Just as indigenous to the dwarf galaxy as the others!"

Veronica made an exceptionally ugly face when she heard that. It was quite a massive drop in confidence to realize that her human side went from being a part of the superior race to a member of an inferior race!

No wonder so many people in the Red Ocean went mad!

Ves was different. He had no time to entertain his darkest thoughts. As the patriarch of the Larkinson Clan, he had a responsibility to lead his fellow Larklnsons through this massive crisis!

He quickly identified his active connection with Veronica as a key asset and advantage.

Even if Ves could do nothing else with this bond, the ability to instantly exchange information across the galaxies was a massive advantage in itself!

As Veronica thought about her current situation, her electronic green eyes suddenly focused on the translucent form of a certain design spirit.

"Helena."

"Yes, Veronica?"

"Where are you present, exactly?"

The design spirit looked confused. "Please clarify your question. What do you hope to hear?"

The cyborg cat slipped out of her mother's grasp and flew closer to Helena. The cat seemed to sniff in the air as she Inspected the Daughter of Death from all sides.

"What are you doing?"

"Is this your 'real' body, Helena?"

"No." Cynthia Larkinson supplied the answer. "This is a manifestation. The Nyxlan Gap can make it so that your sister is able to embody this form to a much greater extent than elsewhere, but her true self is located in a more abstract location."

Veronica nodded her feline head. "That is what I suspected as well. Let me ask you another question, then. Are you still tied to the living mechs in the Red Ocean? The Hex Federation fields millions of Valkyrie mechs. Can you still feel them, sister?"

Helena briefly explored those connections and nodded. "I do, Ves. I can feel the incredible distance between me and those mechs, but strangely enough I do not have the impression that it makes any real difference."

"What about you, mother? Is your avatar present here in the Nyxlan Gap or did she get displaced to the Red Ocean as well?"

The resurrected woman responded with an unnaturally charming smile. "My return to life has strengthened my connection and control over the Superior Mother, so I have an excellent understanding of her state. Much of her is anchored to the people of the Hex Federation. She moves where the Hexers move. She is still tied to the mechs that you have Imposed upon her, so you do not need to be afraid that your toys have weakened."

The cyborg cat rubbed her paw against her chin in thought. "What happened to the Superior Mother makes sense, but what is up with you, sister? How can you mostly remain here but still maintain a strong connection to living mechs that are 50 million light-years away?"

"Do you not recognize your mistake, my son?" Cynthia asked. "You are applying mortal logic to gods. Helena may still have a long Journey ahead of her before she comes into her true power, but she has already Inherited a number of my traits."

Ves paused. It turned out that the reason why Helena operated differently was because of the advantages bestowed by her mommy!

Helena preened in pride. "Did you hear that, Ves? I am special! I'm already more of a god than any of those other 'design spirits'."

"This doesn't quite make sense." Veronica muttered. "The distance is too far away. You can't just handwave that problem away."

Ves disagreed with his mother and his eldest sister.

He was convinced that there was something special going on with those bonds, and it might not be due to Helena's special qualities.

He was currently lacking too much data, however.

For now, he was happy that his sister could still play a useful role in the Red Ocean.

The cyborg cat turned to the resurrected woman. "Mother, can you explain why our avatars can maintain strong connections with our principal selves?"

"As I have said, gods work differently from mortals. It is not my problem if you are unable to embrace this truth due to your secularist upbringing. Perhaps it is better to equate these bonds to the principle of quantum entanglement."

"Wouldn't they have snapped along with the connections maintained by all of humanity's intergalactic quantum communication nodes?"

Cynthia chuckled. "The bond between self and avatar is greater than that. As long as you are strong enough, you and your avatar can be located on the opposite sides of this universe and still remain connected to each other. This may even be true if you managed to enter a different universe!"

"What!?"

That was ludicrous!

"Perhaps you are under the mistaken impression that avatars can easily be made without making an excessive sacrifice." Cynthia said. "What you have been able to do on a wider scale is nothing short

of revolutionary from my perspective. Creating a real avatar demands sacrifice. That has always been the rule."

"Oh. So... there shouldn't be any problem? My human self won't suddenly lose contact with this cat avatar, right?"

"There are still dangers that can sever the bond between the two of you." Cynthia warned. "It is best not to tempt fate. Both your cat avatar and your human self complete each other."

"Which means...?"

"If the two of you ever become Isolated, both of you will end up Incomplete. This is not ideal."

"I see."

Ves could already speculate what might happen. He would end up in a state similar to his mother before her first death.

He chatted a bit more with his mother. Though she possessed a lot of annoying preconceived ideas that reminded him a lot of Gloriana's nonsense, she was still the resident expert on spiritual engineering.

"Ves." Helena spoke up. "I am wondering whether your System is still working as well as before. Can you still smuggle goods from one galaxy to another?"

"I've been wondering about that, actually." Veronica replied. "Let me check."

An awkward moment ensued as the cyborg cat remained frozen in the air.

"...Brother? Is everything alright?"

The cyborg cat's feline expression turned increasingly more alarmed!

"I can't do it. I can't do it anymore."

"What is the matter?"

"I can't enter the System Space anymore!" The female cat shrieked! "I need to conduct a test on the other side. Please wait a moment."

Veronica quickly looked a bit more reassured.

"Are you still able to access your System in the Red Ocean?"

"Yeah. That's a huge relief. Don't get me wrong. I am not addicted to the Mech Designer System. I am sure I'll be fine without it. I just don't want to lose access to all of its handy functions. I am going to need all of the boosts I can get in a dwarf galaxy that has just become a lot more dangerous."

"It makes sense." Their mother remarked as she studied Veronica closely. "Your System is greatly damaged and weakened. While it should still retain strong abilities, it is also crippled in other aspects. It is currently bonded to your main and original human body, so it can only be accessed within a limited distance around it. The displacement of the Red Ocean Dwarf Galaxy has clearly put this avatar of yours well out of the interaction range of your System Space."

Veronica felt Incredibly bummed at this time. Less than a day had passed since his arrival and delivery of the primordial human skeleton, and already his incredibly lucrative 'smuggling channel' had become Invalid!

"Those goddamn phase whales!" The angry cyborg cat cursed! "Couldn't they have waited a few more days or a few more decades before they pulled off their master plan?! Why did they get so spooked by humanity for them to flip the table before humanity has managed to make any serious inroads in their galaxy? They could have at least put up a greater fight before they directly chose to activate their doomsday option!"

Ves at least wanted to ship over a few hundred tons of Unending alloy before the phase whales invalidated this exploit!

Helena flew closer and tried to console the cat. "We are alright, brother. We only had to make use of it once. Our mother has already made good use of your gift. Your cat avatar is still here, at least."

Cynthia also chimed in. "This is not a permanent limitation. As long as you restore your System, it will eventually regain more of its original power and majesty. The distance between the Milky Way and the displaced Red Ocean should no longer be as insurmountable as before to an artifact of this strength."

Veronica's eyes lit up again. "I guess you're right. It will be damn hard to find the rare materials needed to complete its remaining Supply Missions, but once I do... I hope I can open an Instant and low-cost Intergalactic trade channel once again!"

Chapter 5005 Desert to Ocean

Ves continued to work throughout the evening. He preferred to work through the night as well, but his wife demanded his presence.

"Are you blind? We are still in the middle of an unprecedented crisis! Kotor City and many other settlements throughout the frontier have become unsafe, and there are still troublemakers out there that are pulling off all kinds of dangerous schemes."

"I have taken notice of what is taking place. None of the incidents can threaten our clan. We have over ten-thousand mechs and numerous expert mechs on hand. We are allied with other partners that have even more powerful ace mechs at their disposal. Not even phase whales can threaten our security. We are safe, Ves. With several powerful energy shield generators enveloping our Cat Nest, it is impossible for an attack to succeed. General Verle and the other leaders can handle anything that happens throughout the night. Come back and help me reassure our children. They're too scared to fall asleep."

She was right. Ves hadn't really done anything useful aside from studying a lot of data and scouring the fractured galactic net for credible rumors.

As much as he wanted to stay on top of the situation, he knew that everyone was still flying blind mostly. Too little time had passed for people to collect enough data and form proper conclusions on all of the changes that had occurred.

Ves was most concerned with the side effects of getting exposed by Messier 87's powerful radiation.

Even though the Red Ocean was orbiting the large elliptical galaxy at a respectful distance, the radiation generated by M87 still remained fairly significant despite the extensive weakening due to the inverse-square law!

He couldn't even imagine how horrible the background radiation would be for the residents of M87 itself! The center of this gas-rich galaxy was probably unlivable to most humans!

Though Ves wanted to decipher the secrets of the golden galaxy as soon as possible, he understood that there was little he could do on his own. He needed to prioritize stability over satisfying his curiosity.

"I will come. Just give me an hour to make arrangements."

Once Ves issued a series of orders and studied a few more intelligence reports, he left the clan in the hands of his trusted subordinates before retreating to a private bedroom that was built within the underground vault.

As a location that was specifically built to survive a doomsday scenario, it offered plenty of comforts.

The bedroom reserved for Ves and his immediately family might not be as large and opulent as the one in his Royal Mansion, but it was more than furnished enough to satisfy Gloriana's vanity.

His wife and children had already changed into their pajamas.

Gloriana wore a silky night blue outfit that was speckled with reflective silver dots.

Aurelia wore a banana yellow set of pajamas without any further embellishments.

Andraste's pajamas were as red as her hair and featured Images of colorful mechs and action heroes.

Marvaine's outfit was baby blue and featured a bunch of cartoonish fruits with wings for whatever reason.

Ves had already changed into his simple red pajamas.

The abundance of colors and the lack of coordination did not look disturbing. Everyone stood out from each other, making it look as if everyone was special.

Ves carefully studied Ills children as he sat down on the side of the bed. Each of them radiated a sense of nervous energy.

"Miaow..."

Clixie was doing her best to share her warmth with Aurelia.

"Meow..."

Lucky offered his protection to Andraste.

"You are here." Gloriana said as she held Marvaine in her arms. "I called you here because there is something wrong with our children. They can't sleep, and it is not just because their minds are filled with concerns about our predicament."

That caused Ves to grow a lot more concerned!

"I have you sent them to our doctors in order to examine their conditions?"

"I already had them checked a few hours ago. The doctors have actually Inspected the bodies of many clansmen. Each of them are undergoing changes, some more than others."

"What?"

Ves recalled the unreliable reports on the fractured galactic net. There were many biotech experts who conducted examinations on human bodies as well as other organic life forms.

They couldn't really agree on whether the altered environment induced any significant changes on different organisms. The majority failed to detect any meaningful differences, but there was a substantial minority of respected professionals who strongly insisted that the background radiation of M87 had profound effects on everyone's body!

Ves already knew that M87 somehow made everything related to spiritual energy stronger, so maybe that was the reason why his children felt discomfited. They were younger, more malleable and more prone to changes.

They also happened to be abnormally powerful in spirit due to implanting them with their own companion spirits!

"Let me take a closer look." Ves said.

"Mrow~"

Blinky emerged from his head. The Star Cat looked brighter and more vivid than usual. It was as if the altered environment was already making the companion spirit feel more at home!

"Gloriana, children, can you all bring out your companion spirits for a moment? I want to see how they are faring."

"Maow." Alexandria appeared with her head held high.

Mew- Mana presented a sacred image as she emerged from Aurelia.

·cθm Maaw! Yaika ferociously drew her little claws as she jumped out of Andraste.

Meuw. Denny simply looked cute as he rolled from Marvaine's heads.

The newly emerged companion spirits did not float around aimlessly but quickly fell into a fluffy and adorable pile.

Despite their different attributes, the cats were completely comfortable in each other's presence. Alexandria already started to embrace and lick the the three spiritual kittens.

Only Blinky maintained his distance. The powerful cat observed the state of the companion spirits carefully.

Ves himself began to look more and more Intrigued.

"What is the matter, Ves? Is there anything amiss with our companion spirits?" Gloriana asked with rising concern.

"I... need more time in order to figure all of this out, but from what I am able to observe through Blinky, our children aren't in danger. They are doing better than ever!"

"Truly?" Gloriana looked curious.

Her red companion spirit stopped licking the kittens and studied them carefully in an attempt to observe the changes.

Alexandria was not as sensitive towards spiritual energy as Blinky however, so Gloriana failed to detect the changes that made her husband feel more at ease.

"Explain."

"It's still too early to make any solid conclusions, but... have you noticed that the environment is no longer entirely barren of spiritual energy?"

"Hm?"

Ves waved his arm all around him. "For as long as we knew, the environment in the Milky Way and the Red Ocean was largely barren. Sure, it is filled with plenty of matter and energy, but it is lacking in spiritual energy. As far as I know, it can only be generated by sentient life forms. This makes this particular energy type Incredibly scarce in our old cosmic neighborhood."

Iis wife started to understand what he was trying to convey.

"M87 is different?"

"Very much so." Ves replied in a serious tone. "I believe M87 is a galaxy that possesses an extremely high concentration of spiritual energy, so much so that it has integrated into every rock, every asteroid, every native life form and more! The Red Ocean has turned into its satellite galaxy, so we are only just starting to get exposed to a fraction of this ambient spiritual energy, but that is already starting to have an effect on everybody. I suspect that energy-based life forms will be most affected by this drastic environmental change!"

If Ves could think of the implications, then so could his wife!

Her eyes already began to widen as she thought the possible implications.

"If the environment around the Milky Way can be likened to a desert, then M87 is an ocean!" She gasped! "Our companion spirits will thrive like fish to water if that is the case!"

Ves raised his hand in caution. As a mech designer who also happened to get started with biotechnology, he realized that these changes may be anything but ideal.

"Don't celebrate too soon, Gloriana. Humans like us grew up in the Milky Way. Pretty much every species from our home galaxy have long adapted to an arid environment. Now what do you think if lots of humans suddenly get dumped into the middle of an ocean?"

"...They will try to swim and stay afloat for a time, but if they cannot get rescued, they will drown amidst all of the water. Wait, doesn't that mean that every human in the Red Ocean is currently exposed to dangerous energies that will slowly become lethal if accumulated to a certain extent?!"

"Shh." Ves tried to reassure his wife. "Spiritual energy is probably not that dangerous. If there is a threat, then all of us would have sensed it by now. I am not sure what spiritual energy does to normal people who are not that gifted in spirit, but we don't have to worry as much."

"Are you certain about that, Ves?! Our children are not feeling so well at the moment! What if your judgment is wrong!?"

"I am not wrong about this. Blinky has already taken a good look at their companion spirits as well as their bodies. They are all fish in relation to the metaphor. At this range, the ambient spiritual radiation generated by M87 is providing them with a richer environment that is more conducive to their growth!"

"How?"

Ves smiled and reached out to pat Andraste's head. "Are you feeling warmer, honey?"

The little girl nodded. "I am. It's like I am exercising my body, but I'm not doing anything right now. It's so weird."

"There is nothing wrong with you, my little pumpkin. Your body is special, you know that? It has been blessed and altered in a way that has made your physical body more compatible with spiritual energy. Your body is like a sponge that is dropped in a shallow pool of water. It can't help but absorb the spiritual energies that are most compatible with your physique. I'm not sure if there is a way to stop this from happening, but your body isn't doing something that is actively harming itself."

Although Ves did not have enough proof to back up this assertion, he believed in his theories and intuition.

"What about our companion spirits, papa?" Aurelia asked as she snuggled closer to Clixie. "Mana is feeling much warmer than before!"

Mew! The spiritual white kitten affirmed Aurelia's words.

Ves smiled at his oldest daughter. "The altered environment has a greater impact on pure energy-based life forms like your companion spirits. From what I can see, your kitten has nothing to worry about. I think she will grow up even faster than before! That goes for Yaika and Denny as well."

"What about Alexandria and Blinky?" Gloriana asked. "I noticed that you have kept them out of your description."

"That is because they are absorbing the ambient spiritual energy at a much lower rate. Our companion spirits are already mature. Their growth is limited by other factors. Perhaps there is a way to accelerate their growth by employing a special method, but I haven't figured that out yet. The reason why our children's companion spirits are growing faster is because they are still immature and have a lot of room for growth. It's like inflating a balloon. It is easy to pump air into them when they are not yet filled, but once they are at capacity, it is not a simple matter to proceed from this point."

A grave expression appeared on Gloriana's face. "The balloon will pop if you force too much air inside."

"Exactly."

Ves and Gloriana all had many questions, but the situation wasn't particularly acute at the moment. They continued to cuddle with their children until they comfortably fell asleep.

Chapter 5006 Favorable Adaptation

Ves greeted the day after the galactic displacement event with a lot less concerns than before.

It might not be the best idea to sleep the night during a time of unprecedented change and crisis, but the lengthy break did wonders for his mood.

The stress that had accumulated during and after the native aliens successfully pulled off their master plan had faded away.

That did not mean that Ves moved on from yesterday's events, but he was able to greet the new situation with a much more sober mindset than before.

His first important realization was that he was not by himself at this time.

He was still a bit too accustomed to braving different crises by himself or with the forces at his disposal.

That might be an appropriate attitude during those previous incidents, but the situation was a lot different this time!

"Every human in the Red Ocean has fallen in the same predicament!"

This included the average Davutan on the streets as well as the powerful mechers and fleeters who had a lot more powerful means at their disposal!

The increase in ambient spiritual energy could never escape the sight of the Star Designers and god pilots. They must be working hard to figure out the consequences to the people trapped in a much more energetic environment.

While that did not stop Ves from conducting his own investigations, he did not have to act as if his life and the fate of his clan solely rested on his shoulders anymore.

"I should do what I can, but not more." He reminded himself.

He already came up with many different guesses on how the altered environment might impact everything he cared about. He decided to devote this entire day on collecting data and conducting analyses.

All of his previous plans had to be put on pause until he was able to regain his bearings. He had no idea whether it was a good idea for the Golden Skull Alliance to resume the Trailblazer Expedition again.

For all he knew, the increased radiation in the Red Ocean may have made superluminal travel a lot more dangerous than before!

It was better to wait for the Big Two to announce the results of their investigations.

Fortunately, the MTA and CFA did not keep everyone waiting for too long.

"Did you hear, boss?" Gavin excitedly informed Ves. "The Big Two have just announced that they will be broadcasting a joint public address in the evening! Everyone must watch it if they can. This will be a historic speech!"

"Have the Big Two said anything about providing answers, Benny?"

"The mechers and fleeters have all maintained their silence for the time being. If they know anything important, they haven't seen fit to share their information with us. I think they are spending time verifying what they have learned. They cannot afford to get anything wrong in their upcoming address."

That made a lot of sense. Time may be of the essence, but the last thing the Big Two could afford to do was to act too hastily!

Once Ves digested the reports on what had happened to his clan throughout the night, he began his own investigation.

"Let's see if this works."

Blinky emerged from his head and began to float in the air as if he was a little purple cloud.

Just as Ves studied the companion spirit, the companion spirit also examined Ves a little closer!

It was a rather confusing experience at first, but Ves was already accustomed to splitting his focus.

Enough time had passed for the environment to have a minor but real effect on Ves and Blinky.

"You're growing a little faster than before, aren't you?" Ves guessed.

"Mrow mrow."

"The difference isn't too great, though. I believe the concentration of ambient spiritual energy is still too low. You will probably feel more of a difference after a few weeks or months have passed. It's rather strange that an increase in ambient spiritual energy can stimulate your growth. It is not as if you are short of spiritual energy."

Blinky integrated the essence of the Unending One in his stomach. Ves specially designed his companion spirit to devour lots of spiritual energy from other sources.

If it was possible for Blinky to grow stronger by absorbing spiritual energy with the right attributes, then his cat would have fed off the spiritual feedback collected by the likes of the Solemn Guardian and the Superior Mother a long time ago!

Ves would have never allowed his cat to waste so much time on remaining dormant all day!

"Maybe it is a matter of pressure." He speculated.

If a human ended up on a freezing mountain, then his body would start to shiver and become more active in order to generate more metabolic heat.

If the same human ended up in a hot desert, then his body would radiate a lot of heat and produce a lot of sweat in an attempt to cool itself down. Biologists had studied these reactions for a long time.

What was happening to Blinky and every other spiritual entity was entirely different!

The brand-new environment induced all sorts of changes to their conditions, and Ves was just barely scratching the surface of what was happening.

All he could figure out at this time was that the increasingly more energetic environment should be beneficial rather than detrimental to Blinky.

His pet theory for the moment was that Blinky needed to expend less 'effort' in order to maintain cohesion in this new environment.

Back in the Milky Way, life was a lot harder for spiritual entities. If they weren't anchored to anything and if they did not have a way to sustain themselves, then they would automatically erode and dissipate!

Ves had an increasingly stronger feeling that this would no longer be the case in M87.

"Mrow mrow."

"I know. I am undergoing changes myself."

His powerful Spirituality was also taking well to the new environment. It was not only feeling increasingly more at home in this cosmic neighborhood, but it was also growing at an increased rate.

However, what was especially concerning to him was his design flame!

It was starting to burn brighter and stronger!

Ves did not think that his cracked design seed had grown stronger all of a sudden. The only explanation that made sense was that his design flame burned stronger because the more favorable environment added more kindling to the fire!

If this was the case, then Ves was far from the only mech designer to experience this particular change. Every other Senior Mech Designer would get affected as well!

"That's not all. The circumstances have changed for every mech designer!"

Mech design was an extraordinary profession set by the Kingdom of Mechs. Spirituality played an increasingly greater role to mech designers starting from the Apprentice rank.

What would happen if every Apprentice, Journeyman, Senior, Master and Star Designer suddenly gained a lot more access to free spiritual energy? They were bound to undergo a lot of changes!

"This applies to mech pilots as well!"

He needed to schedule a meeting with a handful of his expert pilots. He became incredibly curious to how they fared now that their extraordinary willpower had entered a much more favorable environment.

Now that he thought about it, he should check the conditions of his living mechs as well as his design spirits as well. Both of them were energy-based life forms for the most part. There was no way that both of them would remain unaffected!

"Nitaa, pass the Larkinson Mandate, please."

"Yes, sir."

His loyal bodyguard stepped closer to his desk. She removed the ancestral heirloom from her formidable combat armor before passing it over.

Ves briefly studied the cover of the heavy tome. He had updated its design by embellishing it with additional details.

He especially loved the depiction of beheading a chained phase whale with a sword.

His decision to add a stylized representation to the System Space to the front cover was not exactly wise, but he felt he needed to remind himself where he originally gained the power to grow his clan to this extent.

He wrapped the surface of the cover with treated baby puelmer leather. He originally wanted to dye it red, but he changed his mind and opted for purple in order to add a little more variety.

All-in-all, he was happy with the visual makeover, though it didn't really do anything to make it stronger.

This was why he made an odd expression as soon as he held the book in his hands. He could feel that it was not just sitting around anymore!

The book was actively beginning to absorb the ambient spiritual energy.

Although this process was fairly minute for the time being, Ves believed that the absorption rate would definitely go higher once the environment continued to become more filled with energies!

That was not all. The ancestral spirit resting inside the book was also doing the same!

"Goldie! Come out here for a moment."

"Nyaaaaaa-"

The Golden Cat jumped out of the book and began to cuddle her head against Ves' cheek.

Once they completed their greetings, Ves examined the spirit and made numerous curious observations.

Just like Blinky, Goldie was doing increasingly better in an environment that was becoming increasingly friendlier towards energy-based life forms!

Ves paid special attention to the bonds that made up the Larkinson Network. He also examined the connections to the Larkinson mechs that she presided over as their design spirit.

"They've become stronger."

"Nyaa nyaa."

His suspicions were true!

His design spirits were not only becoming stronger over time, but their 'connectivity' had increased as well!

Although it was difficult for Ves to determine the changes to these stronger and more powerful bonds, he believed that it had become easier for both sides to interact and exchange with each other!

"The bandwidth of these spiritual connections must also be growing increasingly greater as well."

That had great implications for the Carmine System!

If the bandwidth of the Blood Pact expanded further, then it became a lot easier for bonded mech pilots to control their mechs without having to rely on the neural interface!

Of course, this was just a guess for the time being. Ves still needed to conduct a lot of experiments to verify his new hypotheses.

"Thank you for your cooperation, Goldie. I've got what I wanted. Continue to monitor the state of our clansmen. Don't hesitate to inform me if you think their health is at risk."

"Nyaa nyaa nyaa."

Ves scheduled many different meetings with different people.

For example, he met with Commander Melkor as the latter arranged a new patrol schedule for the Avatars of Myth.

"Hey, Ves. Why did you come? You don't usually visit me, and I am sure you have more important things to do." The Avatar Commander said.

"I need to make a quick inspection. This won't take long."

Ves moved closer and held Melkor's visored head with his hands.

"Hey, what are you doing?!"

"Stand still and let me check inside your head. I need to examine the current condition of the companion spirit seed that I have planted in your tiny spirit."

The observation confirmed one of his other theories.

The companion spirit seed acted as if it had moved from a barren patch of land to increasingly more fertile soil!

Just like any other seed planted in a more nutrient-rich environment, Melkor's companion spirit seed was bound to sprout a lot sooner!

Ves previously estimated that it would probably take a few years for Melkor's companion spirit to fully come to life.

That assessment was out of date!

"I have good news for you, Melkor."

"What is it, Ves?"

"Your companion spirit seed is developing faster than before. I am not sure when your new companion will break out, but my personal guess is that you will gain one by the end of the year!"

"That fast?!"

"The rules have changed, Melkor. Not everything about Messier 87 is favorable to humanity, but my work happens to respond particularly well to change in background radiation. I am becoming increasingly more convinced that the cosmic environment around this galaxy is a paradise for all of my works!"

Chapter 5007 Rising Spirits

"So how are you feeling, Jannzi?"

"I feel upset and angry." The expert pilot dourly spoke. "The native aliens have subjected our entire clan to entirely new existential threats. I truly wish that you have never brought us to the Red Ocean. We wouldn't have to worry about getting wiped out by the much more powerful alien civilizations of Messier 87."

Ves did not bother to question the argument that M87 was filled with powerful alien civilizations.

The probability of that happening was too low!

Life always found a way. If countless different intelligent alien species could emerge in the Milky Way and the Red Ocean, then they were undoubtedly capable of rising up in a much larger galaxy that contained a lot more stars!

Even if Messier 87 was somehow far too environmentally hostile to accommodate life, it had over 50 satellite galaxies orbiting around its position!

Each of these dwarf galaxies had a lot of potential to produce powerful alien civilizations. The probability that any of them had developed their technology to the point where they could traverse to other galaxies was great regardless of whether they had access to phasewater!

In any case, it was better to assume the worst. Messier 87 should not be devoid of life, and each new powerful alien civilization posed an enormous threat to the humans stranded in this foreign cosmic neighborhood!

"I am not inquiring about your personal opinions." Ves said. "M87's background radiation is affecting everyone and everything in different ways. I need to understand whether the changed conditions have affected your combat effectiveness in any way. Can you present your companion spirit for a moment?"

Oh. Sure.¹

Yaw!

A small lizard-like companion spirit dove out of Jannzi's head. Ves remembered that he made Callisto by combining Qilanxo's spiritual energy with

Jannzi's strong force of will.

The result was a lizard that possessed exceptionally protective traits!

The addition of Callisto granted Jannzi additional options when it came to empowering the defenses of her new expert mech!

"Let's see

"Well?"

"Everything is okay for now." Ves smiled and waved Callisto back. "Every companion spirit that I have examined is becoming increasingly more comfortable in this new environment. Yours is no different. The fact that it is so infused with your extraordinary willpower hasn't changed this equation. Now I need to examine you directly. Stay still and let me peer into your head."

Jannzi restrained the urge to punch Ves in the face as he looked straight inside her head.

"Can you hurry up, Ves?! I feel more violated the longer this goes on! What are you looking for, anyway?!"

"Fascinating. I expected for your force of will to do better in this environment, but this is an unexpected surprise!"

"What are you talking about?"

Ves finally withdrew as he completed his observations. He looked at her with a speculative expression.

"What is the main difference between an expert pilot and an ace pilot?"

"The latter is able to produce a Saint Kingdom, especially when resonating with a compatible ace mech." Jannzi immediately replied.

"That's correct. Is it possible for expert pilots to produce anything similar to a Saint Kingdom?"

The female Larkinson looked a lot more uncertain this time. "I don't think so, but... I have heard that particularly powerful high-tier expert pilots can produce a much more rudimentary version of a domain field. You will have to ask Uncle Ark. He should know better."

"I plan to meet with him eventually, but the point that I want to make is that all of the rules have changed. I think this one may have been affected as well."

That caused Jannzi to look shocked. "Are you suggesting that I can produce a Saint Kingdom as an expert pilot?!"

"Whoa there, let's not get ahead of ourselves. I am only talking about a future possibility. You are still a relatively young mid-tier expert pilot, so I am not sure whether your willpower can grow to that point. You are just starting to get exposed to M87's cosmic energies, so we will have to wait and see whether you and your new expert space knight can fight like a weaker ace mech."

"I see."

"Let me check your new battle partner. Your living mech has undoubtedly been affected by M87 as well. I already have a decent idea on what I will stumble upon."

The two moved closer to the expert mech that had been the cause for his early and timely breakthrough to Senior Mech Designer.

Ves felt a lot more grateful towards the Dullahan Project. If he hadn't worked on her and integrated her with the Carmine System, he would have probably remained a Journeyman at this time.

In these rapidly changing times, it had become a lot more important than ever for Ves to grasp greater strength!

A new galaxy translated into many new opportunities. Those with greater means would undoubtedly be able to be able to capture a lot more advantages than weaker individuals!

His current observation was meant to confirm whether his work as a mech designer became positively affected by M87.

From what he could see after inspecting the expert mech's spiritual foundation, the recently created third order living mech was definitely flourishing at the moment!

As a 'newborn' living mech, the Dullahan Project was a lot more malleable. She was absorbing certain kinds of ambient spiritual energies at a relatively impressive rate!

Ves had little doubt that if the concentration of ambient spiritual energies became a lot higher, the expert mech would feast even more!

This was impressive for a third order living mech that had already reached a certain degree of maturity!

"Is my mech doing alright?"

"She is doing even better than you, in fact. She is quickly growing into a powerhouse." Ves happily responded. "She will do even better once I design and integrate a couple of Ascension Paths into her spiritual foundation."

"Pardon?"

"Oh, that's for later. I don't have enough time right now. Anyway, I am done here. I need to inspect a bunch of other mechs. By the way, have you come up with a name for your new expert mech? Enough time has passed for you to make up your mind."

Venerable Jannzi nodded. "That is correct. I will let her announce her name."

The expert space knight briefly activated! It powered on its systems just enough to declare her desired name!

"BASTION."

The powerful living mech quickly shut down afterwards.

"Hmmm... good choice. Bastion it is. I think it will do nicely."

A few minutes later, Ves left the hangar bay and visited numerous other expert mechs and expert pilots.

"Hey, Tusa. Let me take a closer look at you and the Dark Zephyr."

"Hello Commander Casella. Has it become easier for you to Commandeer others?"

"Joshua! How is my favorite expert pilot doing today!? Let me see how well you can resonate with the Everchanger."

All of his examinations showed nothing that contradicted his earlier observations.

Every expert pilot and accompanying companion spirit was doing better than ever!

Every powerful living mech was growing at a faster rate!

Although the older living mechs such as the Dark Zephyr and the Everchanger were not growing as fast as the Bastion, they responded similarly to all of the other spiritual entities when subjected to more favorable environmental circumstances!

All of the design spirits were showing signs that they were about to enter into a period of accelerated growth!

After a more thorough examination, it turned out that the more deprived design spirits such as Ylvaine benefited a lot more from M87 than the other design spirits!

The Great Prophet was no longer starving like a skinny beggar!

Even without access to a lot of spiritual feedback, the religious design spirit would probably be able to sustain his own existence once the concentration of ambient spiritual energies grew high enough!

"This is good."

Ves also suspected that the glows of all of his mechs were about to become a lot stronger as well, but not enough time had passed to confirm this particular guess.

In order to verify his next theories, he briefly met with a handful of promising mech pilots.

"Lanie." Ves greeted the young woman in a piloting suit. "I don't know if you have noticed, but have you felt that it has become... easier for you to break through to expert candidate?"

The brown-haired mech champion furrowed her brows. "I haven't, but now that you have mentioned it, I am actually feeling considerably better than I should. Our entire dwarf galaxy has just teleported far away from the Milky Way. That is more than enough reason for me to feel bad. Why isn't this the case?"

Ves moved closer and patted her on the shoulder. "Your emotions reflect your true condition. You may think that what has happened is awful to all of us, but the part of you that is a mech pilot has a completely different outlook towards M87. I believe that your willpower is currently celebrating the change of environment!"

"That... that's wrong!"

"Don't feel ashamed, Lanie. It's not your fault the phase whales teleported us over to the Virgo Cluster. We're about to face a lot of new threats in the future, so I need you to become stronger."

"I... understand, sir."

When Ves met with Commander Taon Melin, it appeared that even expert candidates benefited from proximity to M87!

The Ylvainan expert candidate felt ambivalent towards this change.

"I do not know how I feel about this." He said. "I have spent more time as an expert candidate than most of my peers. If I end up breaking through solely because the Red Ocean is orbiting a new galaxy, I am uncertain if I am as deserving as the ones who broke through under much tougher conditions."

Ves happened to share the same concerns. This was not a new dilemma to him. He already had to contend with it after he came up with the transcendence glow.

If M87 continued to exert a greater effect on all mech pilots, then what was happening was comparable to exposing each of them to a weaker but persistent version of the transcendence glow!

Ves couldn't imagine what would happen if he activated the transcendence glow in a highly spiritually saturated environment!

"There is no difference between you and the others if you break through." Ves tried to reassure Taon. "The clan needs more powerful defenders. I look forward to the day when you can finally step up and contribute more materially to the fight. I have lots of fantastic ideas for your future expert mech. Our clan will require the power of artillery more than ever."

Hopefully, that was enough to correct Taon's mindset.

Once he said goodbye to the legion commander, he briefly checked his schedule.

He wanted to visit the Quint next. As the oldest third-order living mech that was still alive to this day, he suspected that this living antique might be able to derive a lot more benefits than most younger machines!

A sudden call interrupted his current plan.

"VES! YOU HAVE TO SEE THIS!" Gloriana shrieked through the communication channel. YOU NEED TO SHUTTLE OVER TO THE BASE WHERE THE 77TH WARBORN RIGHT AWAY!"

"Huh? What is the matter, honey?"

"It's the C-Man! Do you remember that Venerable Vincent Ricklin's expert mech is the first design that incorporates my god body solution? Well, it is starting to become increasingly effective! If this pattern persists, it will be able to transform into a masterwork mech by itself within two or three years!"

"What?!"

Ves already concluded that all of his spiritual engineering works benefited hugely from exposure to M87, but he hadn't properly considered the benefits for other mech designers.

If Gloriana's design applications flourished under this new environment as well, then that would massively increase the value of her work!

She might even receive enough stimulation to set off her breakthrough to Senior Mech Designer!

Chapter 5008. Dawning Realization

The 77th Warborn Mech Division of the Federal Military of Davute had only been founded a short time ago, but its development speed was among the fastest.

The large number of mechs and mech pilots supplied by the Larkinson Clan and the Cross Clan provided the mech division with a strong core to build around.

The presence of heroes such as General Ark Larkinson and Patriarch Reginald Cross not only raised the morale of this new elite mech unit to the peak, but also raised its priority within the military hierarchy to the top within the External Group!

In addition, the Warborn's strong association with Ves Larkinson meant that nobody in the colonial state's administration dared to oppose its momentum without valid causes!

All of this meant that Davute had given General Ark the best possible stage for him to demonstrate his leadership capabilities and shape the Warborn into a spear that could pierce through Karlach's strongest defenses!

Not a day went by where the servicemen hailing from the Warborn did not train or prepare for Davute's coming war with Karlach.

Yet ever since the dramatic events of yesterday, none of the Warborn spent any thought on Karlach anymore.

A new dawn had arisen over the Red Ocean, and its overpowering light and energies changed everything!

The Colonial Federation of Davute had mobilized almost all of the military assets that it could summon in a short amount of time.

Few soldiers of the new mech division could have imagined that they would have sortie in the defense of Kotor City and its surroundings yet again!

The mech division's temporary headquarters located in the outskirts of the capital had become a hive of activity.

Hundreds of mechs poured in and out at regular intervals. Powerful assault-oriented mechs that were designed and configured for shock tactics were forced into roles that they were never really designed to perform, such as standing guard and rescue operations.

Though the Warborn may have a lot of complaints about their current deployments, none of them complained about their necessity.

The colonial state needed to be stabilized as much as possible.

Normally, it was not permissible for outsiders to casually enter a military base in a time of emergency.

The Larkinson Clan was special, though. Not a single force stationed on Davute VII attempted to stop or intercept any shuttle that bore the distinctive golden cat head emblem.

Besides, this particular shuttle happened to be escorted by two entire mech companies as well as the Everchanger!

The expert hero mech actually played a substantial role in suppressing the worst of the riots yesterday.

When the living mech switched its design spirit to Lufa and amplified the range of its glow to the point where it could stretch across half of an entire city district, entire crowds became pacified at once!

Davute actually owed the Larkinson Clan a substantial amount of gratitude for putting the Everchanger on pacification duty.

The emergency services in Kotor City and the surrounding major population centers on the planet did not get overwhelmed, thereby contributing substantially to the relative calm on the second day.

Even though the worst had passed, the authorities did not lower their guard. The Warborn still had to keep sending mechs on patrol.

Relying on the tranquility glow to keep the people calm was not an acceptable long-term solution. It did not resolve the root causes of the unrest. It was unethical to forcibly mind control so many people outside of an immediate crisis situation.

In any case, Ves felt reassured to have the Everchanger by his side. He would have wanted to add the Bastion to his escort lineup as well, but as a freshly built unit that had yet to undergo any proper testing, it was not a good idea to deploy the powerful new living mech in public.

As his shuttle reached its destination, Ves exited the vehicle and entered a hangar bay that was reserved for high-ranking mechs.

Both the C-Man and the Mars had been stashed inside at the moment.

The main reason why they had been held back at this time was because two different mech designers were slobbering all over their work at this time!

Both Gloriana and Master Benedict seemed to have gone crazy at this time.

Considering the findings that Ves made on his own work, this should not be too much of a surprise.

Every mech designer cared about the effectiveness of his own work!

They dedicated their entire lives to designing stronger and more effective mechs. The progression of their design philosophies literally depended on how much of a difference they could make to the mech industry.

Now that Ves thought about it, his own reaction was a bit too subdued. Perhaps this was because he realized that the best was yet to come. "Gloriana." He greeted as he floated in the air and stopped next to his wife.

Bravo's glow had grown stronger and even more masculine than Ves last remembered.

"Ves." She greeted as she continued to lock her gaze on the scanning data on a sample of TESMAS incorporated in the C-Man. "Take a look."

Ves briefly glanced at the readings. It had been a while since he last worked on the C-Man, but he knew enough about the design and its high-quality smart metal that they were not supposed to work this well!

"This data only reflects a part of the story." Gloriana explained as Alexandria emerged from his head and started to examine the C-Man through her own senses. "Take a look at how much energy this mech frame is absorbing at the moment."

He already noticed it when he hovered closer to the expert brawler mech. As soon as he engaged his spiritual senses, he could observe a lot more clearly how the C-Man's god body was functioning a lot stronger than before!

"This... is more than I expected." Ves uttered as he observed several new interactions that he did not anticipate before!

He already guessed that the C-Man's god body was somehow able to fuel its own physical growth by absorbing compatible elements from the ambient spiritual energies.

While the C-Man indeed drew strength from the environment, the rate of absorption was not particularly high. The concentration of spiritual energies was too low, and even if it became a little higher in the future, it still would not warrant Gloriana's excitement.

What was truly crucial was that the volume of spiritual feedback had increased by a noticeable margin!

Ves knew that Gloriana's god body solution was her attempt to turn all of her works into self-evolving deities.

If she couldn't fabricate the perfect vessel in a single go, then she would lay the groundwork to allow them to evolve into mechanical gods by relying on the power of growth!

Her idea definitely had a lot of promise, especially when she drew her inspiration from her husband.

However, her god bodies had two major flaws.

The first major flaw her new solution imposed a lot of additional demands to the physical design of a mech. The need to insert her so-called 'divine markers' onto as many mech components as possible added a lot of extra work and made it exponentially harder to mass produce her designs!

It may be possible to substantially reduce the difficulty of mass producing god bodies by removing a lot of divine markers, but then the absorption rate would drop so much that it would take centuries for a normal quality mech to evolve into a masterwork!

As it was, the only way to properly fabricate a god body mech was for Gloriana or Ves to fabricate its parts. Only they had the skill and the capability to channel the right design philosophy to embed working divine markers into so many components. They also needed the help of expensive, high-quality production machines to do their jobs.

This was already a major shortcoming that limited the applicability of her design application, but Gloriana's proudest also suffered from a second major limitation.

God bodies demanded an immense amount of worship in order to make substantial progress!

Without the spiritual feedback from millions of people, it was a dream for a mech to transform into a masterwork within a single generation!

Only the most prominent high-end mechs such as the Mars could satisfy this demanding requirement.

Even then, for an ace mech that had already turned into a masterwork, the requirements to become a grand work were so excessive that Ves did not think that the current version of the god body was up to the task!

Ves did not expect Gloriana to make any substantial progress on her god bodies in the short term, but the changing environment had upended all of his predictions!

As Ves not only observed the C-Man's god body in action, but also swept his gaze towards the surrounding personnel, he understood why Gloriana claimed that Vincent's expert mech would probably complete its transformation to masterwork within a year.

"M87... is making everyone stronger." He uttered with dawning realization in his voice. "When ordinary people become exposed to greater concentrations of ambient spiritual energies, their spiritualities are bound to become stronger. Perhaps they won't benefit as much as more talented people, but it only takes a modest amount of growth to double or triple the feedback that can be derived from even the most spiritually dull individuals!"

What Ves was witnessing was one of the consequences of raising the average spiritual strength of an entire human society!

Ves did not know whether people without spiritual potential would be able to surpass the extraordinary threshold without putting any special effort.

He guessed that this was unlikely to happen unless they moved a lot closer to Messier 87.

However, even a relatively light degree of exposure to M87's background radiation should be enough to multiply the quantity of spiritual feedback that a population could provide by several times!

Where was the limit? Would the increase stop at 3 times? What about 5 times?

If exposure to M87 happened to be strong enough to impart spiritual potential in every single human in the Red Ocean, then that would completely change the meaning of Gloriana's god body solution!

This was because the quantity of spiritual feedback that a spiritually active individual was at least a hundred times greater than a person that was completely spiritually dull!

While this sounded a bit ludicrous, this was only possible because the latter was too weak. They fully deserved to be called defective by Cynthia Larkinson and the Polymath.

Ves fell deep into thought. The implications of his latest findings went far beyond amplifying the value of Gloriana's design solution.

This was a matter that would probably affect all of human society in the Red Ocean!

The Big Two would definitely be able to detect this change as well! Ves felt it was better to wait until the MTA and CFA completed their public address.

Ves talked a bit more with Gloriana. His wife had become so excited by the increased effectiveness of her god body solution that she became extra motivated to complete her next design solution!

"I think I will need a few more weeks to complete the Bloodripper Project and Greenaxe Project." She told her husband. "Exposure to M87 is changing so many variables that many new possibilities have emerged. Solutions that were previously impractical in our old galactic region have suddenly become much more viable in this new and more supportive environment. I already have a powerful new idea in mind that should increase the combat effectiveness of our next two expert mechs by a significant margin!"

She was far from the only mech designer who intended to take advantage of the changes to the environment.

Many more mech designers had begun to make similar realizations and were frantically digging' up old plans in order to see whether they had become practical in the light of the new dawn!

Ves began to get the impression that the galactic displacement event was not entirely a tragedy to the mech industry.

It was a gift that invigorated every mech designer!

Chapter 5009. Disruptive Mutations

Once Ves completed his examination of the C-Man, he flew over to the Mars to take a look at this impressive machine.

As an ace mech that was already a masterwork, its god body functioned a lot differently than the god body of the C-Man.

The Mars was an ace mech that had undergone a lot of profound and subtle changes after years of exposure to Patriarch Reginald's willpower.

Its god body did not necessarily help the Mars make any substantial progress into evolving into a grand work, but instead increased the fit between ace pilot and ace mech even more!

In other words, Reginald had effectively hijacked the god body of his ace mech and relied on sheer willpower to altered its mechanisms!

Gloriana did not feel upset about this at all. It was the opposite. The variations to her existing work provided her with a lot of useful research data as well as inspiration for new innovations!

Ves did not pay too much attention to the god body of the Mars at this time. He instead took a closer look at the Original Energy Body System that had attracted Master Benedict's attention.

The skull of Benedict's 'old friend' that was at the heart of his unorthodox system had become a lot more effective all of a sudden!

"Both the Original Energy Bridge System and the Magma Vein System are showing signs of improvement." Benedict told Ves. "The former is much more impacted than the latter due to the inclusion of an element that is highly sensitive towards M87's environmental factors."

Ves nodded in understanding. "Expert pilots are bound to thrive in this new region of space. Even their skulls are able to exert more strength when immersed in a more energetic environment."

"It is regrettable that my Endex System is not experiencing as much of an improvement. An organic skull has many additional qualities that I am unable to replicate with the use of exotic materials. I can only study the changes to the Mars to see whether I can derive a few lesser improvements."

That made sense.

"I think... you will have a lot more opportunities to reproduce your Original Energy Bridge System in the future." Ves said. "M87 is changing every organism on a metaphysical level. Whether this is good or bad, transcendent organisms are bound to become more widespread in the Red Ocean. It will become easier and easier for you to get your hands on special human or alien skulls. Once we make contact with the natives of M87..."

Master Benedict did not look enthused at the prospect of making contact with the aliens of the massive galaxy.

"Once our civilizations meet, it is highly questionable whether I will be able to live long enough to experiment with one of their skulls." He remarked.

Nobody knew how strong the natives of Messier 87 actually were, but they were bound to be challenging at the very least! None of them would be willing to relinquish their valuable skulls so easily!

Rather than worry about this future calamity, Ves felt it was more productive to focus on more immediate matters.

It was important to him to understand why exactly the Original Energy Bridge System was able to supply more energy all of a sudden.

Ves and Master Benedict soon derived the answer.

"The skull is passively absorbing the richer ambient energies in the environment." Ves concluded. "I can't figure out all of the consequences, but it is gradually changing in a way that makes it more receptive towards energy. It is slowly becoming more effective at its job."

Master Benedict nodded in agreement. "I have already conducted numerous deep scans. The density and structure of the skull have already begun to change. While this is only the beginning, the fact that it is happening at all is a serious portend of the future."

What would the skull look like after years of exposure to M87?

"If this can happen to an isolated skull, what about a living expert pilot?" Ves questioned. "Will their skulls and bones undergo a similar evolution?"

"That is a good question. We should closely track and monitor the changes to the physical and metaphysical conditions of our high-ranking mech pilots."

They chatted a bit more about this topic before Master Benedict shared information that Ves had not come in touch with before.

Master Benedict was a lot better at comprehensive research than Ves. The former Skull Architect was also on speaking terms with a lot of other notable Master Mech Designers. His higher rank also granted him access to high-level information channels.

"M87's background radiation is affecting the Red Ocean much more extensively than you think." He quietly shared to Ves. "The Big Two's upcoming announcement will go into this. What I can tell you is that our new circumstances are not just having' an effect on people and objects that are already interacting' to different degrees."

Ves raised his eyebrow. "What do you mean?"

"I have conducted examinations on other mechs, objects and materials. Did you know what I discovered? Certain materials that have nothing' to do with metaphysics are beginning' to show minor deviations in their properties. One metal has become slightly more conductive than usual. An alloy is able to withstand a little more damage than before. A worthless piece of ore is starting to display the properties of a junk exotic. Even our own body tissue may undergo mutations!"

These were incredible findings, especially when put together!

This was because they suggested a pattern that affected far more objects and materials than the ones that Master Benedict investigated!

"Are you saying that the materials around us are beginning to evolve as well?!" Ves asked in shock!

The implications of this development was just as big as his previous findings, if not more!

"Not every material is exhibiting these signs. For example, a plain block of iron is still the same. Of all of the materials that I have investigated up until this point, only less than 5 percent is showing signs of change. This proportion will likely grow higher as our dwarf galaxy will continue to get exposed to M87's environmental factors, but it is unlikely to get anywhere close to 100 percent."

Ves remained in shock. As a mech designer and an engineer, he understood extremely well how much disruption these changes would cause!

"A lot of existing tech will start to glitch and malfunction over time!" Ves exclaimed! "Electronics will short circuit. Data chips will lose all of their contents. Mechs will lose control. FTL drives may malfunction in the middle of space travel. Anything can happen if the materials that are used to build all of our technology undergo strange and unpredictable changes!"

Even though these changes would eventually grant the humans of the Red Ocean access to a lot of powerful exotic materials, the transition to this new reality was bound to cause a lot of harm and disruption!

Master Benedict could also foresee these drastic implications.

"Every researcher, developer and mech designer must work hard to adapt our current technology to a time where the properties of many different materials have grown stronger. While these changes are happening' gradually enough that we do not have to reinvent our existing mechs and starships on the spot, it is not advisable to rely on the same tech for more than a generation."

Ves groaned. He already paid hundreds of millions of MTA merits to transform his Spirit of Bentheim into a quasi-first-class factory ship.

Now it appears that he would have to ask the MTA to refurbish his flagship again in the near future in order to avoid any unfortunate accidents!

"The Big Two will definitely help our society adapt to these changes." Ves predicted. "It is unacceptable for the MTA and the CFA to let us fend for ourselves. Only an organized response will ensure that our society will remain intact after all of this time."

The Design Department's ongoing design projects would have to be delayed as well. It was not acceptable to use materials that were currently undergoing mutations after getting exposed to M87.

All of the mech designers needed to spend a lot of time to substitute those risky materials with more solid alternatives. This would doubtlessly reduce the performance and increase the cost of their works, but this was the price they needed to pay for stability!

Ves grew so concerned that he insisted on studying the data collected by Master Benedict. He grew slightly more relieved when he saw that the magnitude of the mutations remained faint for the time being.

Sure, only a single day had passed since the Red Ocean became exposed to M87's cosmic radiation, but the materials wouldn't become unrecognizable if these patterns persisted for a couple of years.

"What is happening' will eventually put our civilization on a stronger footing than before." Master Benedict told Ves. "A massive increase in the total supply of medium-grade and high-grade exotics will not only allow us to produce greater quantities of strong mechs, but it will also enable the CFA to construct a lot more powerful battleships. The massive disparity in power between the Red Ocean and Messier 87 will shrink, which will put us on a slightly better footing when we eventually make contact with the larger galaxy's aliens."

He was right. The disruptions to humanity's existing' technological base was not that big of a deal in the face of extinction.

The Big Two were probably willing to pay a much greater price so long as they could catch up to the predicted strength of M87's native alien civilizations!

Ves chatted a bit more with Master Benedict. The latter gathered a lot of other scattered information through his network of contacts.

"Will the CFA change its stance on the taboo on warships?"

"I have heard that the fleeters are fiercely arguing amongst themselves regarding this topic, but that is all I know." Benedict said. "I believe it is unlikely to happen in the short-term, but the probability that the CFA will relent in the next ten or twenty years has increased. You can rest assured that our immediate situation won't change."

Ves looked a little more relieved. He did not necessarily want to embrace a reality where common humans had access to warships again. His clan had a strong advantage in mechs, but once they began to adopt warships, he and his fellow Larkinsons would likely get overtaken by powerful states that had much more infrastructure, resources and research capacity at their disposal!

It couldn't be helped. The development and production of warships was a lot more capital and manpower intensive.

There was no way for the Larkinson Clan to match or exceed the capabilities of the Colonial Federation of Davute!

"What is the MTA and the CFA's stance towards the indigenous aliens of the Red Ocean? Those phase whales are undoubtedly at fault for cutting us off from the Milky Way, but we may need their help in order to return home again."

Master Benedict looked uncertain. "This is an important high-level discussion. I truly cannot say how it will end. It may very well be the case that the mechers and the fleeters are unable to form a consensus. Do we even want to return home?"

That... was an important question. Ves only scratched the surface of how M87 was strengthening' everything around him, but he already felt unwilling' to return to the Milky Way!

Of course, Ves recognized that his perspective was skewed by the fact that he had left behind backup in the form of Veronica.

Even if his human self died at the hands of the tyrannical aliens of M87, a part of him would still be able to live on through his cyborg cat avatar!

That did not mean he treated his main self as disposable. His wife and children did not enjoy the same guarantees. Ves still needed to work hard in order to ensure his family would be able to survive the coming times!

Chapter 5010. The Great Severing

The evening' of the second day finally rolled in. The residents of Davute VII actually had to wait until late in the night before the Big Two broadcasted their historic announcement. The local time of the planet was not precisely synchronized to standard time.

In any case, a lot of humans in Davute and elsewhere had stopped what they were doing' in order to witness the MTA and CFA's first public address since the galactic displacement event.

They were bound to reveal a lot of shocking and explosive information!

Ves already had a good idea on the topics that the Big Two planned to mention this time, but most people including his wife should still remain in the dark.

The unrest across human space in the new frontier had subsided to a remarkable degree. This was the power the Big Two had over contemporary human society.

From the poorest third-raters to the most powerful Terran or Rubarthan, each of them had to respect the MTA and the CFA's hegemony over the human race!

This condition did not change after the galactic displacement event. Whether it would remain so in the future was anyone's guess, but for now the Big Two still remained in charge!

"Papa-"

Ves smiled indulgently at Aurelia as he put her on his lap. "Are you feeling well, my dear?"

His oldest daughter nodded. "I feel stronger than yesterday! I have grown more hungry as well."

"That is good." He replied. "That means your body is adapting more to the change in environment than many other people."

Andraste looked even more enthused. "I'll become an even stronger warrior after I absorb the new galaxy's rays!"

Ves coughed. "It's not that simple. Not everything that comes from M87 is necessarily safe or benign. Besides, everyone will get stronger, not just you, pumpkin. You still need to work hard if you want to stay on top of everyone."

He continued to chat with his kids until the time of the announcement had finally come.

A large projection came to life in the underground living room.

It first displayed the two familiar emblems of the Big Two. The mere sight of them was enough to reassure a lot of humans!

After that, the projection switched to displaying a simple metal chamber that was typically used to hold press conferences.

The chairs in front of the podium remained empty. No journalists or other guests had been invited at this time.

The air shimmered for a moment before two new figures teleported into place.

Gloriana gasped first. "That is the Lord of Thermodynamics! He is one of our oldest Star Designers, and one of the first to emerge!"

"Ohhh." Marvaine looked fascinated. "How old is he, mama?"

"His Excellency Hendrick Polt is over 450 years old! He was born at the end of the Age of Conquest. He is one of the great pioneers of mech technology alive today. His work on increasing the performance of power reactors is a large reason why most mechs but especially first-class ones have become so strong!"

It took great accomplishments in order to gain such an impressive title!

"Who is the other guy?" Andraste asked.

"I know him. He should be Fleet Admiral Stanley Argile." Ves replied. "He is the man in charge of the CFA Second Main Fleet. It is the strongest whole fleet that the CFA has transferred to the Red Ocean."

"Is he just as old as the Star Designer?"

"No. He should be around 330 years old according to the record. He's relatively young."

While the MTA and CFA did not believe in centralization, they had chosen their representatives well.

Both the Lord of Thermodynamics and Fleet Admiral Argile possessed enough power and prestige to speak on behalf of their respective organizations.

Ves was not surprised that the MTA did not put forth a god pilot. A figure like that would be so overpowering that no one would pay any attention

to the poor CFA fleet admiral!

The Star Designer spoke first at this time. Though old, his voice held a gentle and reassuring quality that inspired a lot of stability in people's minds.

"Humans of the Red Ocean. Our lives have changed forever. Yesterday, a pan-racial indigenous organization called the 'Red Cabal' implemented a

radical plan to counter our invasion and save their native civilizations from extinction. A group of powerful ancient phase whales have presided

over a grand working that borrowed the strength of all of the phasewater in the Red Ocean to teleport nearly the entire dwarf galaxy away from

the Milky Way Galaxy. The aliens have succeeded in their aims."

"The Red Ocean and everyone inside it have landed over 50 million light-years away." Fleet Admiral Argile continued in a more severe and forceful

It is no secret that our dwarf galaxy has landed over several hundred thousand light-years away from the supergiant galaxy known to us as

Messier 87. This is a location that is far beyond the reach of humans in the Milky Way. They do not have the means to send a starship to our new

location or establish a connection to our greater beyond gate. At the same time, we do not have the technology or the resources to establish a

transportation channel that can bring us back to the Milky Way."

Ves and many other people already suspected that this was the case, but to hear it was another matter!

The Lord of Thermodynamics projected a diagram that showed two dense clusters of lines.

"The event that we have designated as 'the Great Severing' has destroyed most, but not all of our intergalactic communication lines between our- human brothers and sisters that we have left behind. The Comm Consortium's intergalactic quantum communication nodes may have lost connection to their paired nodes in the Milky Way, but this is not our sole means of FTL communication across the stars."

That was big news! The Star Designer's words encouraged a lot of people. They were not alone!

Remaining connected to the Milky Way not only gave them a chance to keep in touch with their distant family and friends, but also gave them access to other forms of support!

The fleet admiral spoke up again. "We are still able to maintain limited contact with humanity in the Milky Way. I should emphasize that we are only able to transmit data, not goods or people over these remaining communication lines. The bandwidth that we have left is only a fraction of what we have before. For the time being, intergalactic communications shall remain closed to the general public. The Common Fleet Alliance and the Mech Trade Association must fully reserve the bandwidth that we have left to facilitate essential technological data exchanges. We may consider

the possibility of offering private individuals the ability to transmit and receive short messages to the Milky Way in exchange for CFA merits or MTA merits."

Ves sighed in relief. His connection with Veronica was not the only means for the people of the Red Ocean to remain in touch with the main human civilization in the Milky Way.

He had thought about exposing this capability to the Survivalists if it turned out that the Red Ocean was completely cut off from the Milky Way.

It may have been important for him to hide his trump cards, but when the survival of everyone in the new frontier was at stake, he was obligated to step up and offer his services!

Now that they addressed their remaining connections to the Milky Way, the two powerful leaders finally turned to their current circumstances in their new cosmic neighborhood.

The Lord of Thermodynamics projected a map that depicted all of the nearby galaxies.

"This is the region of space that astronomers have called the Virgo Cluster since ancient times. It is much more densely populated by galaxies and matter than the Local Group that the Milky Way belongs to. Messier 87 may appear to be located in a relatively calmer region, but that is because it is a cosmic superpredator that has already cleared many of its neighboring galaxies."

The projection changed to a depiction of a smaller galaxy that slowly became larger and messier after 'colliding' and merging with a chain of other- galaxies!

"The reason why Messier 87 not only contains many more stars but has also acquired an elongated ball shape is because it has merged with multiple galaxies. This has caused it to produce many differences compared to a more conventional galaxy such as our Milky Way. The most impactful change to us is that it contains far greater resources and energy than we previously came in touch with. M87 may not look that much larger than the Milky Way, but do not overlook the former's large quantity of stars located 'up' and 'down' the galactic plane. The new galaxy is over 200 times as massive as the old galaxy. Its dense gasses and energies are so concentrated that we are still affected by them in our new position."

The Star Designer dumbed down his explanation to a huge degree in order to make his explanation digestible to the general public. There was no way the legendary Lord of Thermodynamics talked like this when he was engaged in his work!

That was fine. Ves was sure that the Big Two would publish a more detailed and scientific report on their virtual portals after the conclusion of this announcement.

The projection zoomed into the center of M87 to depict its famous black hole.

This was the first supermassive black hole that humans visually imaged!

"You may not have a good understanding of what it means for us to be located so close to such a dense and massive galaxy." Fleet Admiral Argile said. "This is Powehi, the Embellished Dark Source of Unending Creation. It is one of the most massive supermassive black holes that our civilization has detected. It has devoured an unknown amount of other supermassive black holes to the point where it has become a cosmic behemoth. Not only is it massive enough to capture our Red Ocean in an orbit around M87, but it is also firing two powerful jets of matter and energy."

The projection changed to show how the black hole was sucking up a lot of surrounding matter while also ejecting it from its 'top' and 'bottom'!

"The Dark Source is discharging a large amount of matter and energy in two directions at relativistic speeds." Hendrick Polt explained. "One of the jets is pointed away from our Red Ocean is less visible. The other is pointed in a direction that is much closer to our new position. We are far from intersecting this jet, but if you can see closer, the matter and energy that eventually dispersed at the end continues to disperse and drift outwards until it engulfed the satellite galaxies that happen to orbit in this general region in this cosmic period. This encompasses the Red Ocean's new coordinates."

Aurelia, Andraste and Marvaine all looked confused.

"What does that mean, papa?" Their youngest asked.

"The Red Ocean is constantly getting blasted by M87's gigantic exhaust smoke." Ves succinctly explained. "At least we didn't end up in the middle of its engine plume. That would have killed us all in an instant."

The Lord of Thermodynamics adopted a severe expression as he faced his audience.

"The jet of matter generated by the Dark Source pointed closest to our dwarf galaxy will be the cause of untold dangers and hardship, but it is also our greatest opportunity to rise again as a race and a civilization. This is because the jet effectively delivers a small proportion of the exotic energies and particles that are abundantly present in Messier 87. If we harness these new resources correctly, we can advance our technology by leaps and bounds and greatly strengthen our forces! There is no need for us to surrender our dignity as a dominant species!"

Those were encouraging words! The Star Designer essentially stoked everyone's hope by telling them that their situation was not completely hopeless.

With the help of M87's 'exhaust smoke', humanity of the Red Ocean still had a chance to survive any potential hostile contacts with the new galaxy's powerful aliens!