

The Mech 5411

Chapter 5411 Balancing Relationships

The demands of designing a five element variation of the Fey Project were harsh.

Ves needed to be skilled, proficient and knowledgeable in integrating five different types of hyper materials into his work.

Due to the short time that passed since hyper technology became accessible to red humanity, Ves had not worked with too many variations of hypers.

The last four expert mech designs gave Ves a bit of exposure towards hyper materials related to the attributes of metal, water, light and so on, but that was not comprehensive enough to cover the current range of elements.

Ves specifically lacked essential experience in working with the wood, earth and fire elements.

Fortunately, this was not an insurmountable shortcoming.

Many of the general methods and solutions he developed over the course of working on the other attributes were universal in nature.

He could readily apply his toolbox to the elements that he had yet to work upon after adapting his work.

Ves also had a basic degree of familiarity with handling the five elements through the spell manual that he had learned a long time ago. The benefit of swallowing an enlightenment fruit provided by the System was that he could not only gain immediate understanding of all of the theories, but he could also get started on many of the techniques!

Of course, enlightenment fruits did not grant him the highest level of comprehension and proficiency right away. Ves still had to put a lot of time and effort into deepening his mastery. Much of this work consisted of moving beyond the basics and trying to adapt what he learned into adaptations that specifically fit his circumstances.

One of the characteristics of the Beginner Five Elements Spells Manual was that it was specifically designed to be broad and accommodating to many kinds of cultivators.

The theories were all based on basic fundamentals that did not contain too much weirdness that increased the difficulty of understanding them. That said, they did not go too much into depth about the five elements, but that was not the purpose of this beginner book.

The associated techniques were all relatively clean and simple. They taught Ves how to shape an element into different forms based on its various strengths and possibilities. The spells effectively taught Ves how to harness elemental E energy in a safe and reasonably effective manner.

While none of the spells were particularly powerful, they were stable and had a low chance of producing any backlash if anything went wrong.

Right now, Ves was drawing increasingly more on the knowledge of the Beginner Five Elements Spells Manual to weave an intricate spiritual design for the Fey Project.

His ambition was great. He had come across plenty of warnings about recklessly toying around with the five elements. Combining three or more of them at once usually produced violent reactions and could easily cause any arrangement to go out of control!

However, Ves had become so inspired that he believed he could overcome a problem that had plagued many cultivators in the past!

Ves was not arrogant enough to combine the five elements on his own. He would definitely cause an accident if he tried to make such a foolish attempt.

What gave him so much confidence was the fact that he was attempting this fusion indirectly through his work!

Every living mech started off with a blank slate. Ves had a unique capacity to shape his products into living entities. Each of them could integrate certain traits and behaviors in order to strengthen and differentiate them from the competition.

Ves wanted to take this a few steps further by not only integrating multiple elements in his Fey Project, but also form a mutually reinforcing cycle that would cause each of them to feed into each other!

The most perfect outcome that produced the strongest results would be if he was able to form five sequential relationships where the five elements attained complete harmony without getting into conflict with each other!

However, it was that last demand that vexed cultivators the most.

For example, mixing fire and water almost always produced explosive reactions, making this particularly unsuited for sustained effects.

There were many relationships that caused the elements to weaken, destroy, restrain or stabilize each other.

All of it was incredibly uncomplicated and made it a nightmare to combine the elements in any application!

Ves could not completely guarantee that the Fey Project would be able to maintain a stable elemental cycle after he completed it. His ideas were too rough and his prior work and experiences provided far too little reference value.

If not for the fact that his current inspired state helped him come up with many inventive and promising solutions on the spot, he wouldn't have the courage to proceed at this point!

Vulcan's expertise provided him with a lot of assistance. Traditional craftsmen earned their renown for their ability to harmoniously combine and balance out different hyper materials based on varying attributes.

Even so, a traditional blacksmith hardly dared to forge a weapon or other item that combined all five elements at once!

It took a lot of experience and comprehension in working with the five elements for an artisan to become qualified. Even then, a blacksmith had to resort to secret methods and techniques that were specifically developed to channel the five elements in a stable manner.

Vulcan was way too immature as a creation cultivator to be able to make such an amazing work.

Even Divine Blacksmiths had to work a little more seriously in order to produce any work that incorporated the five elements!

How could Ves overcome the insanely high threshold of working with the five elements and turn his remarkable variation of the Fey Project into a reality?

Ves smirked again.

"It is all in the spirit."

This was his main area of specialization. It was the key factor that granted him an unreasonable amount of confidence that he would be able to succeed in this experiment.

The theoretical premise of his idea was rather simple.

The four fey and the main body each encompassed a different element.

It was not that difficult to design five separate metallic objects that embodied the power of fire, water, wood, earth and metal.

The fact that the mech frame and its four fey could detach from each other already prevented a lot of possible dangers.

However, too much separation defeated the point of working with the five elements.

What Ves wanted to make was a drone mech that could fuse and combine the five elements.

This meant that the five objects needed to become connected in a way that enabled them to transfer their elemental E energies with each other!

He needed to integrate them well enough to produce strong enough synergies. His ultimate goal was to produce an outcome that was way more powerful than the sum of its parts.

"If this ambitious idea works out the way I hope it will, it is not impossible for all of the amplification and reinforcements effects to achieve parity with an expert mech!"

This would be an astonishing result!

It was not unheard of for standard mechs to gain enough power to fight against an expert mech on equal terms.

However, much of these incidents involved battles between low-class expert mechs and high-class standard mech.

Any sufficiently powerful first-class multipurpose mech could defeat a second-class expert mech.

Ves did not take this seriously because the cost of the former was far greater than the latter!

It was essentially a form of attaining victory by spending a profligate amount of money!

What truly attracted him to his current idea was that it gave an ordinary mech pilot the hope of defeating an expert pilot with a cheaper mech!

Even if Ves was forced to raise the cost of the Fey Project by adding additional modules and integrating several more varieties of elemental hyper materials, it would still be cheaper than an expert mech of the same class and tier!

Ves did not actually think his five element mech could reach this amazing standard upon completion.

The interactions between the five elements were bound to be rough and imperfect at the start.

This was fine. The Fey Project was a living mech, which meant that its main personality and four sub-personalities would be able to grow, adapt and learn over time.

His five elements mech would inevitably be able to master its endless applications after many years of growth!

"It is just like a qi cultivator in that regard!" Ves realized.

What Ves was attempting to do was nothing less than creating an artificial qi cultivator that possessed an inherent talent in working with the five elements!

This was absolutely unique and would probably be regarded as a miracle in both ancient and modern times!

It was exactly because it was unheard of that Ves needed to work harder than ever to solve its many issues.

One of the dilemmas that troubled Ves a lot forced him to make highly consequential decisions that directly affected the success rate of this experiment.

On the one hand, he needed to make the five living entities independent enough to prevent their elements from conflicting with each other.

On the other hand, he had to make them close and interconnected enough to enable them to reinforce each other!

These were two contradictory goals. Ves could not go too far in one direction without causing the Fey Project to weaken by a considerable extent.

Ves was unable to calculate the sweet spot that would lead to an acceptable balance between conflict and reinforcement.

A Fey Project that was overly prone towards conflict would be able to gain a lot of combat power at the cost of stability. The threat of a backlash would constantly loom over the drone mech's shoulder!

A Fey Project that erred too much on the side of caution would not be prone to producing accidents, but the reinforcements between the elements would become so weak that the mech would fail to live up to its potential!

Neither of these outcomes were acceptable to Ves.

He needed to resort to other means in order to find an acceptable balance.

When Ves surveyed the spiritual design of his Fey Project, he paid constant attention to the strength and intimacy of the permanent spiritual bonds between the fey and the main body.

Ves had created many different spiritual connections over his career.

The relationship with the fey and the main body reminded Ves of himself.

"The fey are sort of similar to the companion spirits or the incarnations of their principal."

This comparison granted Ves another insight that might help him determine the elusive sweet spot!

If Ves regarded the mech frame of the Fey Project as an artificial qi cultivator, then its four fey could function as its companion spirits!

"Can mechs have companion spirits?"

Ves asked this question multiple times before. One of his original goals in designing the Fey Project was to find the answer!

In any case, Ves could use his own situation as a template.

He had created multiple incarnations of himself, each of which were at least somewhat separate from his core self.

Blinky and Vulcan were definitely connected to him, but they were also separate enough to develop their own powers and domains.

Despite the fact that they wielded their power differently, they still cooperated well with Ves!

Ves directed his attention back to the Fey Project. He felt a lot more certainty than before.

"Instead of trying to explore the unknown, it is better to settle on more familiar ground. I can use the spiritual bonds between humans and their companion spirits as a model for my five elements mech!"

He was not completely sure whether this design choice could lead to a successful result, but he felt confident enough in it that he proceeded forward anyway!

It took a remarkably short time for Ves to redesign the Fey Project in the mech workshop. Only a couple of hours had gone by, which meant that he still retained all of the momentum that he accumulated before!

His current situation was highly conducive to resuming his fabrication work, only this time he intended to produce a remarkably different mech.

"Nothing will stop me from realizing my vision!"

Chapter 5412 Building a Bomb

A couple of days went by as Ves worked to fabricate his new five elements mech.

While Ves still considered it to be a variation of the Fey Project, it was clear that the new design had transcended its original root and reached a higher level!

This was the sort of advanced mech design that only Master Mech Designers and other highly competent figures would be able to design.

The sheer difficulty and complexity involved with incorporating the five elements in a single mech would frustrate any other mech designer!

"Gloriana can never design this kind of mech. This falls so far outside of her area of expertise that she would not even know where to begin."

Only people who had become exposed to the secret of ancient cultivation science knew how terrible it was to combine all five classical elements in a single product.

Ves primarily derived his confidence from two factors.

First, he did not foolishly try to combine all five elements in a single mech frame. That was a step too far for him. He needed to develop a much greater mastery of the five elements and become intimately proficient with fusing them with each other before he could develop a genuine machine that could contain all of that combined power.

Second, he believed that creating five living entities that each possessed an inherently high control over their assigned elements would help to control all of those combined elements.

Instead of letting a single living mech bear all of the burden of managing several different energies, Ves split the load and relied on teamwork and a division of responsibilities to better harness all of these complicated interactions.

That made the Fey Project a substantially different living mech than anything else he had conceived of in the past.

In his eyes, the Fey Project was not strictly a mech anymore, but had shifted into another kind of existence.

The use of multiple living personalities and the high relying on teamwork and coordination reminded Ves of how starships were run. Many different ratings and officers utilized their own expertise to fulfill their own distinctive roles and manage their stations to the best of their abilities.

Alone, these spacers were only good at a few jobs at best, but together, they could turn any starship into an efficient and high-performing machine!

Although the Fey Project was clearly not a starship, Ves began to develop the notion that his work started to operate in the same way as a larger vessel.

This caused Ves to entertain troubling thoughts for a while.

"Is this truly a mech?"

One of the fundamental principles of mechs was that they were singular machines that should be controlled by one pilot at most.

While there were rare instances where parties designed mechs that could be piloted by two or more specially trained individuals, they had fallen out of vogue centuries ago due to their heightened manpower requirements.

Ves clearly did not have to worry about this problem for the Fey Project, but substituting multiple mech pilots with multiple semi-autonomous fey was another matter!

"My mech will definitely become a handful to any mech pilot that is 'lucky' enough to pilot it." He chuckled.

He did not worry too much about personality clashes and so on. He inherently designed the fey to maximize their cooperation with each other. Working together to produce greater synergies was their fundamental purpose.

What truly concerned him was whether the final product would become stable enough to be usable in a practical setting.

Even now, Ves was not entirely certain whether he was making his most innovative standard mech to date or whether he was putting together a giant superbomb!

"I have no other choice to see this through." He frowned. "No amount of baseless predictions or questionable simulations can give me any certainty. Only the actual mech can determine once and for all whether my idea has any merit."

He was under a compulsion to see this abnormal project through. Ves could not stop himself even if he tried.

This was the scary part about entering into an inspired state. He had become so driven in his current obsession that he needed to explore it to fullest if he wanted to gain true satisfaction!

Two days went by. It took that much time for Ves to fabricate all of the parts of the revised Fey Project even when he took the additional delays into account.

This was remarkably faster than any of the expert mechs he had fabricated before.

The Fey Project was not as packed with advanced technology as those high-ranking machines.

The Elite Edition of the Fey Project might be a lot more technologically endowed than the typical second-class mech, but it was still a standard mech in the end.

With a modern suite of Terran production machines at his disposal, Ves was able to churn out all of the parts a lot faster than before.

Even the transphasic mech parts hardly took any additional time to make!

As Ves worked on components that integrated hyper materials that were related to one of the five elements, he steadily began to learn more about their uses and the way to handle them. Practical learning granted him plenty of new insights that were never prominent in theory or in his design process.

All of this helped to make up for the considerable gaps in his understanding of the five elements.

Ves knew he could make his life a lot easier if he was willing to call upon a little help.

For example, he could ask certain design spirits for tips. Gaia was an especially prominent entity. Her innate comprehension of wood and earth was so high that she could definitely boost these aspects of the five elements mech!

Ves and Vulcan already possessed a high degree of understanding and feel for metal, so they did not require any additional assistance in this regard.

Only the elements of water and fire were a bit more troublesome to resolve.

If he truly needed help in harnessing the power of fire, then he could call Venerable Isobel Kotin for help.

As for taming the power of water, Ves did not have any better choice than turning to the Phase King.

Neither of these choices sounded reliable to be honest.

Even if Ves was able to borrow a lot of deeper insights related to controlling the five elements, all of this knowledge was only relevant if his Fey Project manipulated them in isolation.

"That is not good enough."

What he truly needed was actual knowledge related to fusing several elements together. Its absence left a glaring hole in his five elements mech that Ves had to fill up one way or another.

He could choose from two different approaches to solve this massive problem.

First, he could rely on his own innate understanding and guesswork to design his living mech and living fey in such a way that would hopefully lead to a favorable outcome.

Second, he could rely on a course of action that had always helped him a lot in these kinds of situations.

He could approach his mother for help.

She was by far the most powerful and knowledgeable qi cultivator in his orbit. Her understanding of cultivation science was incredibly deep. She could always make an insightful remark that instantly illuminated his mind and solved all kinds of questions that had been bothering him for a long time.

Although the Oblivion Empress had never explicitly demonstrated any powers related to the fusion between different elements, Ves was sure that she was able to do so if she wanted!

Even if her ability to utilize multiple elements at once was not that great, a True God should still be able to juggle the five elements on a basic level at the very least!

Besides, his mother gave off the impression that her abilities were far more comprehensive than that.

There were times where Ves would not have hesitated to use Veronica to ask for Cynthia's input on a matter.

However, he felt intensely repulsed by the idea as soon as he thought about it. The reaction from within was so jarring that it almost knocked him out of his inspired state!

"This is my work. The Fey Project I am working on is the result of my own efforts and understanding of the five elements. It might not be perfect, but it is an accurate reflection of my own creativity and abilities. Only I can be responsible for its success and failure."

Ves felt it would be a violation of his spirit as a mech designer to rely on his mother's help to smooth over any problems and increase the fusion of the five elements.

He would lose his incredibly high sense of ownership of his current work, making him feel as if he had realized his mother's interpretation of the five elements as opposed to his own vision!

Aside from that, Ves had developed a sour taste towards any idea that was related to relying for help on anything.

She had taught him a profound lesson that it was better to figure out stuff by himself than to rely on answers that he could not fully understand by himself.

If he had to make a choice, then Ves was far more inclined to put his trust in his own messy solutions, as rough and flawed as it may be. He was willing to bet that his intuition, his inspiration, his brilliance and his prior accumulation were all sufficient enough to produce a successful result.

"Since that is the case, I should just let go of my worries and see whether I can make my vision come true."

He soon transitioned to the assembly phase, which had become a lot more crucial than in previous cases.

Not only was Ves attempting to create five life forms in a single cohesive package, he also had to work carefully and prevent the different elements from generating any explosive interactions.

"Alexa."

"Yes, sir?"

"I need you to activate additional security precautions. This mech workshop is about to become a lot more dangerous than before. At worst, this entire chamber might get engulfed in an explosion that is as powerful as a dozen heavy artillery shells exploding at once."

"That is impossible! There should be nothing volatile in the design of the Fey Project that could produce such an excessive blast. Even the power reactor should be relatively safe due to its extensive safeguards."

Ves smirked at his assistant. "Your understanding is too shallow. Trust me, this is not a mech that you can put together without care. Just make sure that there is enough energy shielding and so on to contain any possible incidents."

"If you say so, sir."

Assembling a standard mech shouldn't be as difficult as putting together an expert mech.

That still remained true for his five elements mech, but Ves still did not dare to let down his guard as he calmly combined the parts together.

He decided to stick to familiar ground and assemble the main mech frame first.

This was the base of his altered Fey Project and harnessed its most dominant element.

Though Ves desired to make a mech that could harness the power of the five elements in equal measure, that was not possible for this mech design.

He instead opted to make the metal element stronger than anything else so that the main body could suppress the four fey if necessary.

This made the fey comparatively weaker in exerting the power of their separate elements, but it couldn't be helped.

As Ves began to fabricate the living fey one by one, he could feel as if he was bringing different elemental seeds to life.

Fire. Water. Earth. Wood.

Each additional fey altered the flow of E energy radiation in the environment.

The entire surroundings became more and more charged, and when different elemental energies started to get into close proximity to each other, the interior of the mech workshop started to show faint signs of instability!

Nonetheless, it was impossible for Ves to stop now that he had come so close to completing his latest experimental work!

He could already judge that his five elements mech would become a masterwork as soon as it was complete, and its quality would not be low among its exalted kind!

This was by far the most innovative mech that he had designed in a long time. Not even the Lionheart or the Blood Star Mark II could make him feel so excited as today!

However, the closer he came to completing his five elements mech, the more he felt that everything was heading towards a certain explosion!

If the newly created living mech could not get its act together and immediately work to control all of the volatile energies, it would rip itself apart due to an inability to control all of the conflicting forces!

"Damn it, I am counting on you all! Don't let me down!"

Sweat dripped from his brow as he slowly put together the parts of the final living fey.

A part of him wanted to separate all of the fey from each other and the main body.

That would easily solve the immediate risk and prevent an explosion from occurring.

However, doing so would cause the fey and the main body to become a lot more distant from each other. They would no longer be able to produce strong synergies from fusing their elements in deep and profound ways.

This would defeat the purpose of designing this special mech!

This was why Ves deliberately kept all of the completed elements close to each other. Only this way would all of the living entities share close enough bonds with each other!

"Almost there."

Ves visibly slowed down as he carefully affixed the final plates and screwed in the final pieces.

He worked so slowly that the mech workshop had almost descended into silence. Even the smallest of noises became amplified in this charged environment.

Ves did not dare to work any faster. He felt as if he could instantly cause the situation to cascade out of control as long as he made the wrong move!

His mind, spirit and body tensed to the greatest possible extent as he felt as if he was fighting the hardest battle of his mech design career.

As he began to put the finishing touches on his work, the accumulated E energies began to produce stronger and stronger interactions with each other.

This was already a sign that a chain reaction was about to take place!

Chapter 5413 Too Many Reactions

Nobody living on the surface of New Constantinople VIII had any idea of what was happening inside an mech workshop situated underneath a fairly small and remote base. Aurelia and the other children attended another eventful day in school.

Despite growing up in a radically different environment from the locals, the Larkinson children got along well with the young descendants of the Terran elites.

No one who worked or studied at the Joan Devos Elementary School were stupid. Even the youngest of children had been told to never look down on the son and daughters of the youngest tier 3 galactic citizens in the new frontier!

Fortunately, the Larkinson children managed to prove their abilities well enough since they enrolled at school.

In the late afternoon, their classes had already ended. Most of the children stayed on the elementary school's expansive campus in order to take part in different extracurricular activities.

Over a hundred girls crowded around a podium. Their eyes displayed varying degrees of admiration as they watched a lone girl weave movement after movement in line with a song that evoked the tragedy and loss of the dark days of the Age of Conquest.

As Aurelia continued to perform her dance, she made slow and sweeping movements that conveyed her depth of emotion. Pure passion empowered her every move, making it seem as if her extraordinary body glowed with divine radiance.

She danced like a woman far beyond her years. It was impressive how much empathy she conveyed without saying a single word. A few of the younger and more sensitive girls had even begun to shed tears as they became overtaken by the tale conveyed by this radiant girl.

The ambient E energy in the environment stirred with her dance routine. Her extraordinary mind, spirit and body were so much more integrated with these hidden energies that it appeared as if the heavens applauded her performance.

Elsewhere, a three-dimensional sports field became packed with energy as two teams of girls competed against each other in a much more brutal fashion!

None of the boys and girls demonstrated any elegance or beauty in their movements. They instead used their antigrav boosters to dash through the air in an effort to wrangle a shiny blue ball into a goal!

"Pass the ball to Jack!"

"Which Jack?!"

"The short one!"

"Okay!"

Before the boy wearing a black outfit could do so, a girl came up and used her own hockey stick to block her opponent's own stick.

"Not again!"

Though the boy attempted to use his larger body to shove the girl aside, she skillfully used her antigrav booster to move sideways just enough for her to wrench her adversary's hockey stick from his hands!

"No!"

"It's mine!"

Andraste grinned as she spun her body around in the air before whacking the other end of her hockey stick against the floating ball with enough force to launch it all the way to the other side!

After that, she planted her foot against the body of the boy who lost hold of his stick. An energy shield prevented her foot from harming the other playing, but conveniently gave her a launching pad that allowed her to dash upwards at a considerably greater speed than if she relied on her antigrav booster.

"Byebye!"

As the practice game progressed, none of the children participating in this multifaceted sport exhibited signs of nausea or dizziness.

Zero-g hockey had become popular among potentates and those who yearned to become a mech pilot.

Many of the skills and experiences that children accrued over the course of practicing this sport translated well into mech piloting. The more proficient they became in zero-g hockey, the faster they acclimated to operating mechs in a spaceborn environment.

Sadly, a lot of children tended to drop out of the sport once they reached 10 years old. Once they found out that their genetic aptitude could not support their piloting ambitions, they lost all of their drive and motivation to do anything else related to a profession that proved to be unattainable.

The children playing in the zero-g field were still a few years away from receiving the verdict that would dictate the rest of their lives.

It would be a shame for these players to be forced away from pursuing their dreams. Many of them were designer babies that had been explicitly raised to excel in piloting mechs. Although there was more to soldiering than piloting mechs, it just wouldn't be the same for them if they settled for becoming a naval officer or an elite infantry commando.

The Age of Mechs may have come to an end in the Red Ocean, but the glory of the mech piloting profession had not diminished in the slightest! In fact, its popularity had actually grown ever since the god pilots showed their dominance to the public.

Months after the battles of the Operation Night Jazz took place, the astonishing events still remained in everyone's consciousness.

Andraste and many other hopeful children constantly dreamed about what they had seen. The more they envisioned the impressive god mechs, the more they yearned to pilot their own powerful machine one day!

The girl gripped her hockey stick tighter. Even though there was no proof that playing zero-g hockey would promote the formation of suitable genetic aptitudes, Andraste wanted to believe that her efforts and her devotion to her goal might make a crucial difference in the future!

Even as she paid attention to the ball, she actually allocated a part of her attention to cultivating the relatively simple cultivation method supplied by her father.

A small quantity of ambient E energy swirled around her before getting absorbed by her body and spirit.

Andraste could not tell whether this effort made any difference to her goal, but at least she felt she was trying to make progress.

"I will not allow myself to be defeated by my own body. I have the best papa in the galaxy. His genes will make sure I will become a talented pilot!"

Under that strong and unflinching belief, Andraste began to display more fighting spirit, causing her to jump into the zero-g hockey match with greater fervor and aggression! Meanwhile, the youngest of the three Larkinson children was still too young to engage in any fixed extra-curricular activities.

He instead spent time in the local equivalent of daycare. Marvaine had a fantastic time as he was able to play with lots of Terran children.

"Cats are cool."

"Nuh-uh. Dogs are better."

"No way! Cats are much nicer!"

"Dogs are smarter and more loyal!"

"You two are both wrong! The best pet is a roxhaw bird."

"Roxhaw birds are too big and alien. They are disgusting!"

As Marvaine argued in favor of cats with his new friends, he suddenly paused and turned his head in another direction.

"Huh? What is the matter with you, Marvaine?"

"Can you feel it, Barney?"

"Feel what?"

"Something is happening... something big." "I do not know what you are talking about." "It's happening somewhere far away..."

Marvaine had access to more senses than his little friends. His spirituality and his companion spirit both bestowed him with the ability to observe and feel the flow of E energy. Right now, those senses had begun to warn him about a distant buildup of extraordinary energies.

Because it was happening many kilometers away from the city of Sandan, Marvaine had only managed to detect the escalating buildup when it had already become powerful enough to pose a danger to a large area!

"Wait!" Marvaine stood up in shock! "My home is over there! I need to go back!"

A short time before the young Larkinson deduced that a potential calamity was unfolding at the place he called home, a certain mech workshop had become charged with more and more unstable energies.

The five elements were difficult to tame!

As the Fey Project was nearing completion with each passing second, the ambient E energies that usually existed in a state of calm had become more concentrated and agitated. This was because the living mech and its fey had already begun to attract and absorb the elemental E energies!

This was not a bad phenomenon if it happened in isolation.

What made this situation different was that the five elements did not always get along with each other.

Due to the relatively close proximities of all of the living objects, the elemental E energies all started to bump into each other.

This produced many different reactions depending on various conditions.

For example, when wood energy came into contact with fire energy, the former started to get consumed by the latter, causing the power of fire to grow!

The growing fire energy started to react violently with water energy, causing the latter to evaporate in most cases.

These were but a handful of the many simultaneous interactions between all of the different energies.

No matter whether the energies increased or decreased in quantity, the net outcome was that the five elements became more and more concentrated in the mech workshop, crowding out all of the other attributes that could have played regulating or isolating roles!

This was not good news as the magnitude of reactions escalated rapidly over time!

Though Ves banked on his special mech to use the reinforcement cycle of the five elements to wield unsurpassed power, the incomplete machine was unable to exert enough control over the process!

Without sufficient control, the E energies would continue to interact with each other without any form of restraint, making it so that the likelihood of an explosion chain reaction grew ever greater!

Ves and Vulcan already felt that they had embarked on a course that could not be stopped!

They had to see this fabrication run to the end no matter the consequences!

Ves and his incarnation clearly sensed the destructive escalation of energies in the environment and tried to speed up their work to the utmost!

Once they finally affixed the final part into the only remaining fey, they released a lot of tension and backed off from their work.

"It's done!"

Those words acted like a signal that caused the Fey Project to truly come to life!

Even without a mech pilot in the cockpit, the recently completed machine already woke up and gained an immediate consciousness as a third order living mech.

"Welcome to your new life. Before you do anything, try and rein in the energies that are building up in and around your brand new mech frame. You need to act quickly before you explode!" Ves quickly urged his new creation.

The authority of its creator weighed heavily on the completed Fey Project.

Even though the newly born living mech had not yet acclimated to its new existence, the drone mech quickly tried to stabilize the surrounding energies by engaging its cultivation method.

The Larkinson Metal Guardian Mantra was most suited to absorbing and harnessing the power of metal.

The concentration of metal energy slowly started to diminish as the new living mech eagerly strengthened and fortified its new spiritual foundation.

The fey did not remain idle as well! Each of them possessed independent personalities and were able to cultivate slightly different methods that enabled them to attract different elemental E energies.

For a moment, it looked as if the new mech had begun to tame the five elements.

However, the initial absorptions created a void that attracted even more elemental E energies from the environment!

This not only negated the effort to make the mech workshop safer, but also caused it to become even more dangerous as practicing five elemental variations of the Larkinson Metal Guardian Mantra increased the concentration of dangerous E energies even further!

Ves grew alarmed by what was happening! "Damn! Stop cultivating! You are not helping matters here! You need to employ another method to tame these energies!" The living mech would love to do so, but it was starting to grapple with another problem.

The elemental E energies absorbed by the living mech caused the relationships between the main body and its four fey to grow less stable.

It looked as if their mech frames had become subjected to the same volatile elemental interactions as was happening in the rest of the mech workshop! The situation was growing even more dangerous!

Chapter 5414 Energy Tamer

The five elements mech had just come to life.

The highly unusual variant of the Fey Project initially looked like everything that Ves had hoped to build after he had entered an inspired state.

The modifications made to the design of the base model successfully enabled the machine to interact with all five classical elements at the same time!

With the main body developing an affinity for the metal attribute and the four separate fey acquiring an affinity for the other four attributes, Ves had successfully brought a machine to life that was technically able to harness the power of all five elements!

However, Ves quickly noticed that all was not well with his latest creation. Its current state was highly volatile as the large quantities of elemental E energies that had built up in the mech workshop over the last half day did not show any signs of weakening.

Instead, the inherent properties combined with the initial cultivation attempts of the five elements mech had caused the energy concentration in the mech workshop to increase even more!

This was bad as any accident that might occur under these circumstances were bound to cause greater damage!

"C'mon! Try and control the elements. You were born to reign over them. Do not let them take control over you. I know you can do it. I expressly designed you to harness all five elements. Now is the time for you to begin with fulfilling your purpose!"

Ves continued to encourage and provide advice to his living mech. He did not know for certain whether his words made any difference, but he could see and feel the mech starting to take more concrete action.

He had withdrawn his Living Workshop ability at this time. Now that the five elements mech came to life, the glow and life energies no longer helped anymore.

Vulcan still remained close at hand in order to monitor the situation and take steps if necessary.

There was little that Ves and Vulcan could do to make the situation less charged and volatile.

They could reduce the dangerous buildup of E energies by disassembling the five elements or bringing its various fey far apart from each other. However, neither of these options were acceptable to Ves!

This was because despite putting in the last part that was supposed to bring his experimental mech to completion, his latest creation had not actually triggered a masterwork transformation at this time!

This was perplexing to Ves because he was too percent convinced that the overall quality of his five elements mech had most definitely surpassed the masterwork mech at a comfortable margin.

"It's not complete!" He concluded with an astonished voice. "My new mech is still in the process of taking shape."

This was unprecedented and completely unfamiliar to him. Although he desired novelty, he did not ask for his attempt to fabricate a powerful masterwork to get stalled at this time.

Ves couldn't help but worry more about his latest creation. Everything had gone off-track as he had inadvertently caused a new situation that put his new work through an unknown process.

"What is happening?"

This was supposed to be one of his best and most exquisite mechs that he had built up to this point in his career!

None of the other masterwork mechs that he had fabricated in the past few years could match the depth of passion, ingenuity and personality he put into this seemingly unassuming standard mech.

The Fey Project that integrated five different types of hyper materials and came with five separate personalities vastly exceeded the potential of any other quasi-first-class standard mech!

It might even be one of the rare standard mechs that had actually become so powerful that its combat effectiveness had actually reached the level of a first-class mech!

That was one of the dream goals of every mech designer. There was no challenge involved with designing second-class mechs that could fight on an equal level against other second-class mechs.

The true difficulty lay in designing a second-class mech that could actually give a first-class mech a run for its money!

Even if the modified Fey Project was a quasi-first-class mech that pushed against the upper limits that defined a second-class machine, there was still a huge gap that should have separated it from real first-class units.

The main factor that distinguished the mech classes from each other was their energy supply.

The more powerful the power reactor, the more powerful their functions.

The five elements mech possessed the same quasi-first-class power reactor of the Elite Edition of the Fey Project.

It was costlier than the power reactors used by products such as the Pacifier and the Ferocious Piranha mech lines, but it was still far outmatched by the cheapest first-class power reactors!

The fundamental reason why the five elements mech was able to bridge this crucial gap was because it was meant to use the power of heaven to make up for its power deficiency! In that sense, Ves had clearly succeeded because his new mech showed greater and greater signs of imposing more control over the elemental E energies.

It first started with the mech and fey themselves. The conflicts that took place from within gradually started to get sorted as the living entities filtered and separated anything that was not in the right place.

Ves gained more and more hope that his new mech would be able to deescalate the volatile situation.

However, that hope did not last long.

While the new living mech became preoccupied with putting its insides into order, the external environment did not grow any calmer.

In fact, they started to get more and more concentrated as the multiple reinforcement reactions continually promoted the emergence of more elemental E energies. The internal problem became less acute, but the external problem had grown even worse!

It even started to affect the stability of the newly created mech. The growing pressure from the environment was causing the young mech to grow even less stable. Both Ves and Alexa started to grow increasingly more concerned about this pattern.

"We should transport your new mech away from this mech workshop!" Alexa urgently proposed. "Once your new machine has been brought to a stabler location, the buildup will no longer happen."

"I am not so sure about that." Ves frowned. "While you are partially correct, my mech will always be at risk of building up a cascading energy cycle whenever it attracts too much elemental E energies. Bringing it away won't solve its own inability to prevent its internals from exploding. What my living mech truly needs to do right now is to learn how to tame the violent energies from the onset."

"Can't your mech do that later after we have relocated it to a different venue?"

Ves immediately shook his head as his instincts issued a stern warning. "Your idea has merit, but... it is not that simple. I have a feeling that my five elements mech will become severely deficient if that happens. I am not sure why, but I think it is best if we wait and let it sort its current situation. I am willing to risk an explosion for this opportunity. Besides, just because we cannot move it does not mean we can help in other ways."

"Mrow!"

Blinky flew forward and began to devour the energies around him. The energy concentration started to drop as the companion spirit took the opportunity to compensate for all of the energies that he had released from his Blinkyverse these past few days.

However, the absorption of E energies soon started to produce other accidents!

Small explosions occurred in front of Blinky as the indiscriminate devouring of E energies caused the different elements to collide against each other, thereby producing all sorts of chaotic reactions!

"Damn!"

"Mrow mrow!"

Blinky quickly stopped what he was doing and started to absorb a single element instead.

The local energy concentration continued to decrease, but Blinky no longer created as much instability as before. In fact, the Star Cat was actively helping to defuse the dangerous situation!

The metal element was the most dominant one in the mech workshop, and it was what the main body relied upon to keep the other elements in line.

The problem was that the quantity and concentration of fire, water, wood and earth energies had grown too strong for the metal element to restrain them any further. Blinky helped to ease the situation by draining the strongest of those four remaining elemental energies.

Fire energy happened to be particularly abundant at the moment, so that was what Blinky focused on absorbing.

The ancestral star that shone inside the internal universe slowly started to grow larger, hotter and brighter.

However, Blinky's devouring rate did not make a significant dent in the situation.

This was what made the five elements so difficult to work with. As long as they all came into contact with each other, many of their interactions caused the different elemental energies to reinforce and egg each other on without any apparent limit.

Though the five elements mech had begun to assert its control over the volatile E energies in the environment, it still a bit short despite its growing proficiency.

If this went on, the energy concentration in the mech workshop would rise past a point where it became hopeless for the mech to control the situation!

In the end, as much as Ves had attempted to make his new mech as strong and alive as possible, it was still too young, immature and weak to properly harness all of these powers at once!

Perhaps that was one of the reasons why his mech had not yet reached completion.

Ves needed to make up for this major deficiency in order to complete a mech that was fully capable of sustaining itself! "How can I do that, though?"

The five elements mech had already transitioned into a living mech with multiple personalities. Its spiritual foundation had become fixed, which meant that Ves was unable to improve it as directly as before.

This was incredibly inconvenient to Ves as it meant that he could not employ his usual tricks to tweek with the spiritual foundation of the five elements mech without restriction. There were not many other ways for Ves to take action to solve his creation's weaknesses.

"Myah myah myah." Maia expressed her concern as she acted as Alexa's spiritual eyes.

Ves abruptly turned to his discipline's companion spirit. "Wait a second."

He just recalled Maia's inherent capabilities. Even though the new companion spirit was relatively young and weak, one of her starting abilities might mean the difference between a complete success and a partial success!

"Alexa!"

"What do you require, sir?"

"I need you to bring Maia forth and use her ability to promote the growth of any living entity on my new living mech. If you can make it grow fast enough, my work may actually be able to tame all of the unstable energies."

His suggestion surprised Alexa. "You are asking much of my companion spirit. She is only a few months old."

"Maia is not a baby. She is already pretty decent. Just try out and see if it works."

"Very well..."

Though Alexa was afraid of exposing Maia to danger and forcing her to exhaust herself in favor of an unstable living mech, the companion spirit still flew forward until she was close enough to touch the exterior of the five elements mech.

"Myah..."

Once the cat extended her paw and made contact with the hard-working five elements mech, Maia began to inject a steady stream of gentle and helpful life-attributed E energy into the living machine.

The modified Fey Project eagerly absorbed the donated E energy. It even began to display a growing mastery over its ability to tame the violent energies.

"It is working!" Alexa happily explained!

"Good job!"

A huge weight lifted off his shoulders. Ves started to grin as the situation started to look more optimistic. The mech workshop was steadily becoming less and less dangerous with every passing second.

However, just as it appeared that his mech was starting to gain the strength and control it needed to assert more control over the surrounding elemental energies, a growing sense of danger started to loom over the mech workshop.

Ves grew increasingly more uneasy as his instincts detected that his living mech was about to become subjected to an even greater threat. Even Alexa started to frown and look concerned at times.

"What is going on? Shouldn't the problem be resolved?" His comm suddenly chimed an emergency alert.

This was not normal, as Ves was sure that he had muted the device so that he could fabricate his mech without interruption.

"Why have you called, Gavin?"

"Uhm, I hate to interrupt your work, boss, but we are observing highly abnormal weather patterns outside. It used to be fairly clear a few minutes ago, but a large amount of dark clouds have spontaneously formed above Diandi Base. We are even detecting a rapid buildup of lightning, so much so that the power of this thunderstorm is looking to break a record on this planet! There is no obvious explanation for what is happening. Can I ask if your work has anything to do with the rapidly changing weather."

Ves widened his eyes when he heard the news.

Chapter 5415 Abnormal Event

New Constantinople VIII experienced an abnormal climate event that was not supposed to happen!

The Devos Ancient Clan that terraformed the planet and actively regulated its weather in order to produce a stable and comfortable living environment had no warning that a powerful lightning storm would form in a matter of minutes.

More and more authorities became alarmed as the data readings started to paint an increasingly more alarming picture.

The sheer amount of power accumulating inside those dark clouds had already exceeded the planetary records and started to soar into heights that shouldn't even be possible!

At first, the Devosans and other experts suspected that the storms were a form of sabotage or attack.

Perhaps a hidden alien infiltration force had deployed an exotic alien weather machine that caused the weather in a target area to turn into a major hazard.

What reinforced this suspicion in the minds of the local Terrans was that the epicenter of the storm happened to be situated right above Diandi Base! Every Terran knew the VIP who resided in this fairly remote location.

While the defenses of any decent Terran-built base should have been able to resist the power of many possible weather events, the abnormal and purposefully engineering lightning storm was starting to produce readings that were so incredibly high that the Terrans doubted whether their measuring systems were accurate.

Nonetheless, faulty readings or not, this strange lighting storm was definitely shaping up to be powerful enough to cause serious harm if not outright deaths if it formed above Sandan or any other population center!

As the Terrans began to activate emergency measures that were meant to disperse dangerous weather patterns as best as possible, their attempts to take action suddenly ceased when they received a notification from the Red Association.

The Bluejay Fleet up in orbit had sent a strong notification that warned the Terrans to stay away and refrain from interfering in what was currently happening.

"Those cretins! Are these mechers blind? This lightning storm can damage a large amount of infrastructure if it drifts over a nearby settlement."

"Be that as it may, the Red Association has issued a high-priority directive to us. This means that the mechers have signaled their willingness to take direct action to prevent us from getting involved in any fashion."

"This is a violation of our own sovereignty! New Constantinople is our planet, not theirs!"

Though the Devosans were awfully upset about the RA's unwelcome interference, they ultimately chose to back down and let the mechers deal with this abnormal matter.

Meanwhile, a short distance away from the site that had attracted the lightning storm, a pair of notable spiritual entities manifested themselves underneath the surging dark clouds. The two translucent female figures stared meaningfully at the storm above their heads.

"The power... is greater than anything that I have witnessed." Helena remarked. "My little brother needs help in order to save his work. We should do what we can to mitigate the damage."

"No." The much more powerful spirit stopped Helena from taking action. "The heavens are jealous. My son has brought a mech to life that shouldn't exist. Actions have consequences, and they cannot and should not be avoided. If he wants to become a god among creators, he must face his tribulations head-on and struggle against the forces that seek to put him back into his place."

"But mother! His mech will break if we do not lend a hand! This lightning tribulation is far too powerful. Heaven's punishment is bound to sunder this poor machine within the first three strikes."

"Then so be it." The Superior Mother crossed her arms as she held her decision. "Tribulations exist to eliminate the weak and the unworthy. Failure means that my son has done poorly and that his work is not meant to survive in this reality."

Though Helena understood her mother's logic, she still found it awful to see her brother's hard work get ruined on the moment that he was supposed to welcome his magnificent creation.

"Poor mech..."

"Do not pity the mech or its creator, Helena. All creators must be prepared to endure these tribulations in their struggle to create ever more remarkable works. The more they try to break the rules and reach beyond their limits, the more the heavens will push back against their defiance. Creations that cannot withstand punishment have no right to occupy so many resources and pollute the environment."

While the lightning storm continued to build up, the interference produced by this highly anomalous weather event started to generate more and more interference. It became a lot more difficult to transmit signals and maintain contact in the overcast areas.

Diandi Base happened to suffer the most from this interference effect!

This shouldn't have happened. The former military outpost was equipped with a high-powered communication array that was designed to overcome any jamming or hostile environmental effects.

The only way that the Larkinsons stationed in the base could still maintain outside contact was by using the well-shielded quantum communication node that was buried underground.

It was through this active link that the occupants received an important message from the Bluejay Fleet.

"What?! Are you crazy, Jovy?! You can't teleport my new mech away under these circumstances!"

"It will be perfectly safe." Jovy's shaky projection replied to Ves. "The Orden Hammer has already begun to descend to the surface. She is taking a detour in order to avoid coming into contact with the lightning storm, but once she has come close enough, her remote teleportation system should be able to push through the Interference and teleport your mech to an open field that is right outside your base. For safety's sake, we will refrain from teleporting your precious machine any further."

The Orden Hammer was the name of one of the two light cruisers assigned to the Bluejay Fleet. She was considerably smaller and lighter than the Tarrasque, which meant that she could safely descend from orbit and maintain altitude under atmospheric conditions.

Ves suspected that the Tarrasque was powerful enough to fly in a planetary environment as well, but she would obviously have to strain her flight systems way too much in order to prevent her heavy hull from crash landing.

As Ves considered Jovy's proposal, he briefly swept his gaze around the mech workshop.

The first-class production machines were highly likely to get wrecked if lightning bolts descended from the skies!

While they were certainly capable of withstanding a few hard knocks, Ves did not have any confidence that they could resist the electrical violence that was about to come down from above.

Ves had witnessed this phenomenon several times over his career.

Though rare, each time he managed to trigger a lightning tribulation, the effects and results were always remarkable!

Different from last time, Ves sensed that the storms were much more powerful and violent than the one that he had experienced during his sublimation.

Back when he created a living divine artifact in the form of Veronica, he not only evolved into a higher life state, but accidentally became a phase lord as well!

This magical transformation took place under a long and continuous rain of lightning bolts that went on for an abnormally long time.

It was because of this prior experience that Ves knew that he needed to take the current storm a lot more seriously!

For whatever reason, the act of creating a masterwork mech that could inherently harness the power of the five elements provoked a much more violent reaction!

He could not even begin to figure out this strange logic. The modified Fey Project might have become an amazing mech due to his efforts, but it shouldn't have become strong enough to merit such a powerful response.

Unfortunately, nobody asked for his opinion. The storm showed no sign of abating and could unleash its formidable might at any point of time.

Given how the mech workshop not only contained a large amount of expensive production machines, but also happened to be built underneath a base structure that contained all manner of other expensive lab equipment and sensitive instruments, Ves could not allow his five elements mech to withstand this tribulation at this location!

"Fine. Go ahead and do it. Just make sure you bring my mech far away to avoid any collateral damage."

The Orden Hammer had already been underway before Jovy notified Ves, so it did not take long for the brand new mech to disappear from the mech workshop.

Ves and Alexa had already left the underground facility and quickly moved up until they entered a defense tower that gave them a clear view of the mech that had been translocated a short distance away.

The special mech remained completely silent, but it had already begun to cultivate again.

It was as if the living mech was acutely aware of the threat from above. The altered Fey Project sought to attract and absorb as much elemental energies as possible.

The rate of absorption had escalated so rapidly that the rapidly increasing elemental energies were beginning to exhibit the same unstable reactions as before!

Ves did not have the time to care about the dangers that his new work was incurring. "Can you give us an explanation of what is happening, sir?" Alexa asked with concern. She had grown increasingly more concerned now that she was able to see the growing and darkening clouds above her head.

"Sure, but I only have time to give you a brief overview."

Ves gave her a very truncated explanation on lightning tribulations.

To be honest, he did not know too much about them either. He could only base his understanding off his personal experiences as well as the references contained in the knowledge bestowed by the enlightenment fruits that he had swallowed.

His mother could probably explain a lot more about this mysterious phenomenon, but he had no time to consult her opinion at this time!

"Should we deploy our mechs and our transphasic shields over your Fey Project in order to increase its survival chance?"

Ves shook his head. "No, Alexa. That is not appropriate in this case. I know enough about lightning tribulations that any form of external help will cause the storm to grow even stronger. There are strange rules involved that are designed to close these kinds of loopholes."

The young woman furrowed her brows. "Is it possible to circumvent this condition by mounting an additional power reactor or transphasic shield generator onto its back?"

"That might actually work, but there is no time for us to strengthen our mech any further. I am starting to sense a rapid growth in power. I think the first lightning bolt is about to strike down my mech!"

"Meow!"

"Miaow miaow!"

Lucky and Clixie had slipped inside the control tower at one point. The two cats looked frightened as they both huddled together.

CRACK!

Though Ves had felt it coming, he did not expect the storm to strike at his five elements so soon! A blindingly bright lightning bolt struck the poor mech with great power!

The power of this strike was so formidable that the exterior of the five elements mech had already begun to exhibit light surface damage.

Though the quasi-first-class transphasic hyper armor system held up according to his expectations, Ves did not have any reasons to relax.

This was just the warmup. Ves could clearly feel that the storm was escalating in power. The subsequent lightning strikes were bound to become progressively more powerful. The poor machine's armor system would never be able to resist this onslaught!

"No. I can't let my mech proceed like this!" Ves shouted in panic. "It needs to go online and activate its azure energy shield generator. My work has a significantly higher chance of surviving this event if we can bring it fully online!"

Though Ves was not sure whether this was a good idea, it was the most effective solution he could think of. His new mech was only operating at a fraction of its potential while it remained in a dormant state!

Chapter 5416 Violent Resource

What was a lightning tribulation?

Ves had been wondering about this mysterious phenomenon for years on an intermittent basis.

He had two vivid memories about his experiences with this powerful force. Both of them had a profound influence over his life, his work and his views on how reality worked.

Frankly speaking, Ves lacked a thorough understanding of this powerful and far-reaching phenomenon. He knew that it popped up in times when a cultivator was about to make an amazing breakthrough. It also appeared to pop up when a creator attempted to make an exceptional product.

Ves had done both over his career, so he had at least a bit of personal experience of what it was like to trigger a lightning tribulation.

The first time he caused a lightning tribulation was when he attempted to make the Superior Mother.

With the knowledge that he possessed today, he understood that the ritual that he had devised around the birth of the Superior Mother was not that big of a deal.

What truly caused her birth to go to the next level was the use of extraordinary ingredients and the ambitious scope of her creation!

However, witnessing a lightning tribulation from afar paled in comparison to becoming subjected to it himself!

Ves could never forget the moment where his attempt to create Veronica caused a lightning tribulation to barge into the System Space like it was nothing and directly rain down lightning bolts onto his body!

Strangely enough, the punishment he induced due to his excessively negative karma turned out to be a lot more manageable than he thought.

The quantity of lightning bolts was unimaginably high, but even if they ramped up over time, their individual power never exceeded his body tolerance and the defensive properties of his Unending Regalia.

It was at that time that he personally experienced the other side of the coin.

The power of heaven's punishment was not only a force of destruction, but could also serve as a force of creation!

The premise was that the target of heaven's wrath possessed the strength to weather the storm and survive long enough to allow the creation force to do its job!

Having benefited enormously from the accidental circumstances that led him to sublimate his entire being to a higher level, Ves understood that lightning tribulations represented both danger and opportunity.

Ves initially thought that his new five elements mech had a good chance of resisting this lightning tribulations.

Based on his previous experiences, he thought that they were quite tame. It was as if the heavens were just going through the motions and never truly showed that much animosity to their targets.

He quickly had to change that impression at this time when he saw and felt the size and scope of this lightning storm exceed anything he had ever experienced in the past!

This was not the weak tribulation lightning that seemed to do Cynthia a massive favor by strengthening and transforming the Superior Mother's foundation for the better.

It was also not the relatively tame and 'friendly' sequence of lightning bolts that not only healed him and strengthened his foundation to the point where he developed a glow, but also gave him a freebie and turned him into a phase lord!

Ves did not forget about the weird hallucinations either. Not only did several ghosts of the past, present and the future confront him about his alleged deeds and misdeeds, he also became introduced to what truly passed as the heavenly authorities of the Milky Way and Red Ocean!

According to the theory that he devised back then, the two galaxies could actually be regarded as living entities on an unprecedented scale!

Just the notion that the two galaxies were alive and sentient would cause almost every human to call him nuts before forcing him to undergo mental health treatment!

Though Ves only had vague impressions of what it was like to get into contact with those powerful sentient galaxies, he remembered that they had shown a considerable amount of goodwill towards him. He was unclear as to the reason why, but he wasn't in the habit of looking at a gift horse in the mouth.

However, at this time, Ves did not sense any of that goodwill or benevolence from the current lightning storm!

CRACK!

A golden bolt of lightning struck the exterior of the five elements mech, causing its surface components to look a little fried!

The mech had never been rated to withstand so much electrical violence, particularly when it was also empowered by E energy and other mysterious forces!

Although lightning tribulations were unfathomably deep to the likes of Ves, he instinctively felt that this storm was not trying to go easy on Ves and his work this time.

Ves could sense an overwhelming amount of ruthlessness and malice from the dark and surging clouds that were blackening the skies!

It was as if the authority responsible for dispatching this storm was hellbent on destroying an abomination that should not exist!

This was incredibly bad for Ves. He never designed his modified Fey Project to resist such an inexplicable force. How could he have known that the product of his inspiration would violate a rule that he was not aware of and provoke heavy punishment upon its creation?

Ves was not prepared, and neither was his work!

If his five elements mech wanted to have any chance of surviving this unavoidable tribulation, then it needed to be piloted right away!

"We need a pilot inside that cockpit now!" Ves urged.

"Are you certain you wish to do so, sir?" Alexa asked with obvious concern. "If this lightning storm continues to grow stronger, the risks to both the mech and its occupant will become considerable."

"We have to try!"

Ves did not want to give up on his product! He was willing to take the chance and let his mech fight for its right to exist, even if it risked the life of a mech pilot!

However, the next difficult decision he had to make was who he should put inside the cockpit of his new work.

When Ves moved to the Premier Branch, he had only brought a small amount of personnel from the expeditionary fleet.

He had dispensed with bringing any Larkinson mech pilots because they were completely useless in a first-class environment. It was better to rely on other specialists to man the powerful turrets and other defensive installations of Diandi Base.

The only mechs assigned to defend Diandi Base were the units dispatched from the 306th Bluejay Fleet.

A constant rotation of at least two mech squads descended from orbit and patrolled the base.

Additional mechs also shadowed his children whenever they traveled to school and back.

Though Ves had been depending on the protection of the mechs assigned as his security detail for months, he never really put too much effort into befriending them. He hardly knew them on a personal level and pretty much treated them as background elements.

Right now, he was regretting the fact that he had neglected to bring any reliable mech pilots to his side.

He even sent away Saintess Ulrika Vraken by requesting her to escort Gloriana to the planet where his wife was about to receive her new cranial implant!

Ves wished that he had brought a trustworthy champion such as Venerable Joshua to his side. His favorite expert pilot would undoubtedly be able to get along well with his new living mech!

Still, the mech pilots of the Red Association were highly competent in their own right. They were used to piloting much more complex and difficult machines.

A drone mech such as his modified Fey Project shouldn't be too difficult for them to control. The only major challenge that was outside of their realm of experience was the usage and combinations of the five elements.

However, that was what the living mech was for. Ves believed that the combination between a highly trained mech pilot and a living mech that possessed an inherent talent in manipulating the five elements might be just enough to survive this violent storm!

"Jovy!" He transmitted over a spotty communication channel. "I know this is a difficult request, but can I ask you to volunteer one of your pilots to take charge of my new Fey Project?"

"The pilot is already on his way. I have already anticipated your demand. Trust me, we are just as invested in seeing your work prevail against this force."

A first-class multipurpose mech was already approaching from a distance at high speed.

From the trajectory of the incoming mech, Ves deduced that it had launched from the Orden Hammer.

"I am at your service, Professor Larkinson." A reassuring male voice transmitted over another channel.

Ves' eyes lit up when he recognized the newcomer. "Major Jankowski! I did not expect you to be the volunteer."

"This is an anomalous incident that is of great interest to the mech designers and researchers of the Red Association. We have received direct orders to send in our best. My piloting qualifications are the highest out of our entire mech company. I have a moderate experience in handling exotic or alien technologies, though my exposure to E energy phenomena is admittedly shallow." Major Jankowski factually explained.

That sounded good enough for Ves. That was exactly the kind of pilot profile that could complement his five elements mech.

"Alright, I will transmit a very short instructional manual to you. There is a lot of depth to using its fey in combination. This will be the key to resist the forces of destruction. Can you teleport directly inside the cockpit of my new mech or do I have to open up an entrance?"

"Stable teleportation has become untenable in this hostile environment. Once my first-class multipurpose mech has arrived beside your work, I will need you to open up an entrance to the cockpit at the right time. We will need to time this transfer between the lightning strikes to avoid any accidents."

"Understood! We have it under control. The frequency of lightning strikes is not that high, fortunately."

CRACK!

The bolts did not come down as quickly as expected, but their power was definitely escalating at a rate where they did more than minor surface and electrical damage to a quasi-first-class mech!

What was worse was that the storm clouds showed no signs of abating. They were growing stronger with each passing minute, making it seem as if it was trying to gather more power in order to rule out any chance that his five elements mech would make it past this event!

As Major Jankowski's mech was closing in at rapid speed, Ves stared back at his unique work.

Was this enough to save his machine from destruction?

He was not so sure about that. He still had an awful feeling about this lightning tribulation. Its character was too hostile.

Nonetheless, the greater the danger, the greater the reward.

The power of a lightning tribulation was split into two opposing forces. The force of destruction was the most obvious one, but the force of creation was equally as strong!

When Ves stared up into the violent storm again, he did not only regard it as a threat this time.

In his eyes, the huge and expansive storm clouds also served as a resource!

An immense amount of creation power was hiding in those dark and ominous clouds. If Ves could leech just a fraction of it, he could use the potent creation energy for all kinds of high-end purposes!

His eyes sparked all of a sudden as a crazy idea came to mind.

Desire welled up inside his mind as he recognized what an amazing opportunity this lightning tribulation had brought! He would be a fool if he did not try to take advantage of the circumstances!

"Sir, where are you going?!"

"I am going on a trip!" Ves dismissively waved his hand as he turned around and summoned his Unending Regalia on the spot. "You should stay and coordinate with the mechers. Make sure you are ready to command the new Fey Project to open up its cockpit when the time has come."

He did not even care about exposing the fact that he was able to hide his relic armor inside his own exclusive pocket space. As soon as his Unending Regalia appeared, it opened up and wrapped around his body, cladding him in armor that had already resisted a lightning tribulation in the past!

Alexa Streon was not stupid. She quickly deduced his radical plan!

"Professor Larkinson, do not do this! You are about to take an unacceptably high risk! Your life is not worth endangering!"

"Hahahaha! You are wrong, Alexa! This is exactly the time where a mech designer like myself needs to stick up for his own work! I have faith in my own work!"

To Ves, the lightning tribulation was not just about taking advantage of its power, but also a moment where he needed to prove with his actions that he was willing to stand by his own works.

He would not be able to take pride in his craftsmanship if he abandoned his works to their lot!

Chapter 5417 Underneath the Storm

"Madness!"

Alexa helplessly watched her willful and apparently insane superior donned his armor and exited the control tower in a hurry.

"Miaow!" Clixie reacted with alarm at Ves' departure.

"Meow?"

"Miaow miaow!"

"Meooooow."

Clixie hissed and repeatedly smacked Lucky's head with her paw.

"Miaow miaow miaow!"

"Meooow! Meow meow meow..."

Lucky reluctantly left his comfortable perch and phased through the wall so that he could follow after Ves.

As Ves went outside and was just about to fly towards his latest work, a pair of first-class mechs barred his way.

The soldiers of the Bluejay Fleet had been tasked to protect their charge. That meant that they sometimes had to go as far as to protect their principals from their own foolish decisions!

"My apologies, professor, but we cannot allow you to come any closer. The threat posed by the lightning storms are too much for your defenses. We also cannot guarantee that we can teleport you away or shield you from any potentially lethal attacks."

Ves grew annoyed at the obstruction. He knew it was not their fault for doing their duty, but every second they held him back was one too many as far as he was concerned!

He did not bother to talk to the RA mech pilots directly.

"Teh! Jovy. Get these mechs out of my way! This is too important for me to miss out upon!"

"The risks are too great, Ves. You do not know what you are-"

"DO NOT GET IN MY WAY!" Ves roared inside his closed helmet. "You are a smart man, Jovy. You should have an inkling how much I care about my new mech. It is more than just a disposable machine. It is a labor of love and a product of my passion. I have invested so much of myself into it that its meaning is far too great to me. If you dare to stop me from helping it tide over this storm, then I will seriously question whether you have the heart of a true mech designer."

Ves appealed to Jovy as one mech designer to another.

Only the people of their profession understood best what it meant for one of them to become so invested in a mech.

If Jovy's priority was to keep Ves safe, then the powerful first-class multipurpose mechs would never let a tier 3 galactic citizen expose himself to such a crazy risk.

However, if Jovy understood how much a mech like this benefited its developer, then he should not deprive a mech designer of his ability to support and observe his new creation.

"Let me go already." Ves impatiently demanded. "I know how to take care of myself. This is hardly the first danger that I have subjected myself to. I am not in the habit of joking around when it comes to my life. "

Jovy eventually relented after a few seconds.

"Very well. We are willing to defer to your judgment, as dubious as it may be. You should know that our mechs will remain close at hand and ready to move at any second. If we determine that you and your mech will not be able to handle the storm any longer, then our mechs will forcibly carve out the cockpit from the rest of the mech frame if that is what it takes to evacuate you to safety."

That was good enough for Ves. "Fine. Let me proceed now. My mech is not sufficiently prepared for this event and needs my assistance and guidance as soon as possible."

The two first-class mechs helped to escort Ves towards his mech.

"Meow!"

Ves briefly reacted with surprise when Lucky chose to come along as well.

It was not all that bad for Lucky to accompany him this time. The gem cat was a lot tougher than he looked, and his archetech construction happened to be highly resistant towards electrical damage.

Even if Lucky's existence was in danger, the cat's ability to survive was stronger than that of Ves!

"Haha, let's ride this storm together, buddy!" Ves boisterously said.

"Meow..." The gem cat sounded a lot more reluctant about this endeavor.

The sense of oppression grew stronger as they neared the five elements mech.

The machine had already been struck by lightning bolts several times, and that had caused the tough transphasic hyper armor plating to show more and more signs of surface damage.

Ves worried more about the internal damage. The armor system should have done a good job at preventing the tribulation lightning from frying most of the electronics, but he was afraid that a few nearby systems had already shut down from all of the excess current.

Once he and his cat got close, they met up with the armored form of Major Simon Jankowski.

"Professor." The most senior mech officer of the Bluejay Fleet curtly greeted. "Please wait for the next lightning bolt. We should dash inside as soon as it has landed onto the mech."

The piloting suit of the Red Association possessed a lot of advanced functions. In light of the current dangers, the pilot had opted to mount additional armor and other defensive modules onto his body. This caused his suit to bulk up to the point where it was covered by modular armor.

CRACK!

Another blinding golden flash of heavenly might instantly descended from above and struck the five elements mech!

"Meow!"

Experiencing this lightning tribulation at close distance was a completely different experience!

The thunder that buffeted against Ves' armored form seemed to shake him to his core. Both his bones and his spirituality had become rattled by the power of this strike.

"Move move move!"

"Meow meow meow!"

Two humans and one gem cat quickly slipped inside the cockpit that Alexa had just opened by remote.

As soon as they slipped inside, the cockpit slid shut again, forming enough defensive seals to prevent the occupants from getting directly exposed by the force of lightning.

Major Jankowski already took his seat and began to boot up the five elements mech without any delay.

"I have accrued an extensive amount of piloting experience, and I have a high adaptability towards piloting unfamiliar mechs. However, it has been decades since I last piloted a second-class mech. What do I need to pay attention to when controlling your machine?"

The five elements mech activated remarkably quickly. It was as if the powerful living mech was already aware of the urgency and sought to speed up its activation as soon as possible.

Midway through the activation process, everyone inside couldn't help but recoil when a powerful force struck the machine yet again!

CRACK!

"Meow!"

The entire cockpit shook as if a powerful explosive had detonated at close range! The entire metallic machine rattled for a second before subsiding again.

Though Ves sensed that his mech had held up decently well, it had likely incurred even more damage.

"There is no way the inherent technical properties of this mech are strong enough." Ves emphasized once the tense moment had passed. "The full explanation is a bit too long, but I have concluded that the only way that my machine can make it through is if it leverages the power of the five elements."

"That is a blindspot in my skill set."

"Don't worry. I have already taken that into account when I made this work. The living mech and its semi-autonomous fey will take care of this burden. Do not try to assert control over everything. Trust in my mech. Listen to its suggestions and give it enough room to take independent action if it sees fit to do so. Just think of it as working together with an advanced AI system."

CRACK!

The power of this next lightning bolt had ramped up considerably since last time!

Fortunately, Major Jankowski had activated the modified Fey Project fast enough to activate its azure energy shield!

Even though its specs were not as good as the energy shield of the Larkinson Edition of this mech line, its defensive power was still superior to the transphasic energy shields of old.

The highly synergistic combination between hyper technology and transphasic technology happened to be so good that the azure energy shield actually managed to block the entire strike!

However, when Ves accessed a port built into the side of the cockpit and used his backdoor to gain administrator access over his work, he grew concerned when he glanced at the data readings.

"The azure energy shield has taken a nasty hit." Ves commented. "It should be able to block a few more strikes, but it will not be able to last much longer."

Major Jankowski frowned. The azure energy shield was the strongest defensive tool of the Fey Project.

"What do you advise?"

"Do you feel the multitude of energies surging around this mech? Those are the five elements. The lightning bolts are causing a bit of them to disperse, but there still still be enough for your living mech to work with. You need to work with it to form a more effective defensive barrier, either by strengthening the azure energy shield or the armor."

"I am not versed in these abilities." The RA mech officer gritted his teeth. "Only high-ranking mech pilots can effectively wield energy to amplify the performance of a mech. I can sense the living mech at work, but it is scrambling for solutions as well."

Ves briefly closed his eyes and placed his armored hand against the side of the cockpit.

"Let me guide you, then. I understand these energies a lot more, and I can guide you all into shaping them in useful forms."

"Mrow."

Blinky emerged from Ves' head and hesitatingly looked around.

"My companion spirit will help out the fey as they do their jobs. The most important priority at this moment is to channel more power into the water fey. It is equipped with an azure energy shield of its own and can amplify our defenses by utilizing water energy."

CRACK!

The active azure energy shield had become less stable as the lightning strike had taken a toll on its reserves.

Ves became subjected to a greater sense of urgency.

At the same time, he became dissatisfied with the current arrangements.

"Wait. Don't rely solely on the azure energy shield. You need to strengthen the armor system of the Fey Project as well. You need to reinforce the mech frame with more metal energy by relying on the affinity of the main body. There might not be enough metal energy to resist the lightning bolts that will come down later, so you need to nurture it with earth energy."

That caused Major Jankowski to grow confused. "Will that truly work, professor? I do not mean to doubt your theories, but they sound closer to superstition than sound and proven science."

CRACK!

"I know how you feel, but it is precisely because of these whacky old theories that has triggered this lightning storm in the first place! I do not make the rules here. We have no choice but to work with what we have. Just work together with my mech and try it out, okay?"

While Major Jankowski quickly worked with his living mech to manipulate the fey and the surrounding E energies, Ves was free to do his own work.

A gleam shone in his eyes as he used his deep access to his own creation to transmit a large amount of instructions that caused the internals of the drone mech to shift in unusual ways.

He needed a bit of help in order to produce his desired outcome. He had designed his Fey Project a bit too well. The cockpit of his new creation was so well protected and isolated that there was no way he could fulfill his secondary goal.

"Lucky."

"Meow?"

Ves transmitted a schematic of the Fey Project that highlighted over a dozen different components to his gem cat.

"I need you to phase through this mech and either cut or move these components. Can you do that, Lucky?"

"Meow!"

"Oh, come on! It's not that dangerous! It will be quick. Even if you get shocked, the power won't be high since much of the current can't reach the internals. Just do it, Lucky. It will be good for you as well! I promise!"

CRACK!

His reluctant cat went to work and phased through the cockpit in order to make the necessary modifications.

While Lucky completed his assignment as quickly as possible, Ves began to withdraw a multitool from his Unending Regalia and began to make physical modifications to the side panel.

"What are you doing, professor?" The RA mech officer asked with evident concern.

"Ah, you will see. Don't worry. It shouldn't be dangerous."

A minute and a lightning bolt later, a frazzled-looking Lucky eventually returned to the cockpit.

"See? You're still fine. I told you that my Fey Project is well-shielded enough."

"Meeeeeeooww..."

Ves ignored his gem cat's complaints and quickly completed his little project.

In the end, Ves had managed to cobble together four rods, two of which were sticking out from the side while the other two stuck out from the floor.

When Ves moved his armored form so that all of his limbs came into contact with the rods.

"Jankowski, shut off the azure energy shield for a moment. You need to give it a rest anyway. Let the armor absorb the next hits."

Ves waited until the skies launched another attack.

CRACK!

This time, the cockpit suddenly became charged with a bit more energy as a small fraction of that tribulation lightning actually shot through the upper rods, ran through the Unending Regalia and exited through the lower rods!

"Yes! This is it! This is the power!"

Chapter 5418 Fried Cats

The newly built Fey Project was holding up a lot better now that it had come online.

With Major Jankowski in charge, the mech no longer stupidly stood around.

It not only adopted a stabler posture, but also deployed all four its living fey!

Sadly, not all of them could offer a lot of assistance. The water fey was the only one that was equipped with a defensive module.

That did not mean that the other three fey were useless, though. Their innate affinities to the different elements allowed them to exert a measure of control over fire, wood and earth energy.

Both Jankowski and the living mech were still in the process of exploring what they could do with the tools they had at their disposal.

Wrangling the energies was not that simple. They not only interacted in many different ways with each other, but also became dispersed to an extent whenever another golden lightning bolt struck from above!

The five elements mech was the first of its kind as far as Ves knew. No mech pilot had any sort of practice with a machine that possessed similar capabilities.

This caused Jankowski and the new living mech to go through a lot of trial and error.

Many of their attempts to strengthen the Fey Project's ability to resist the lightning tribulation failed to produce any favorable results. They had to try out a different method in order to shape the elemental energies in a way that could help them at this time.

Ves paid constant attention to the state of his creation. His mind was swirling with ideas, and he occasionally made suggestions based on his own understanding of hyper technology and E-technology.

CRACK!

At the same time, Ves cheekily took advantage of his mech's lightning tribulation to siphon a part of that ultimate power for his own use!

Though Ves clearly understood that he was subjecting himself to excessive risks, a part of him felt it was an enormous waste if he did not take advantage of this opportunity to further his comprehensive evolution!

A look of dissatisfaction appeared on his face as his body did not even manage to register the effect of the last lightning strike.

His Unending Regalia had channeled all of the current that flowed through the jury-rigged rods.

"This is not good enough. What am I afraid of? My armor is holding me back!"

Ves just realized that it was better to take advantage of this moment while the Fey Project was still in good shape and the power of the lightning tribulation hadn't ramped up too much.

Besides, Ves had made additional modifications to his scheme that enabled him to exercise limited control over how much lightning power would loop through the cockpit.

"Let's do this, then!"

Major Jankowski initially did not notice what was happening to the side, but when he briefly took a look, the mech pilot grew alarmed when he saw that Ves had actually stepped out of his combat armor!

Ves not only shed his armor, but also deactivated his energy shield generator along with other defensive gadgets.

In order to prevent his electronics from getting fried, he had removed most of them from his body and set them aside.

Only after that did he use his bare hands and feet to touch the four rods.

"Sir! What are you doing! You are putting your body in serious danger!"

"I know what I am doing, major! This isn't the first time that I have endured a lighting bath. I do not know if you have been informed about this, but I am actually a phase lord. My body can take way more punishment than you think!"

The critical moment quickly neared.

Due to how much additional risks Ves had incurred by removing his armor, he felt a lot of dread towards an unstoppable force that was about to unleash its might yet again.

CRACK!

The cockpit shook more violently and the rest of the mech frame rattled a lot more as the power of the last bolt had increased yet again!

"Ah!"

Ves felt electrocuted in a way that he had never experienced before!

He already suspected it before, but now that the golden current had briefly run through his body, he personally confirmed that this lightning tribulation came from a much different source!

It not only held not a single scrap of goodwill towards him, but probably operated by different rules as well.

This lightning tribulation was not a force that was willing to promote his goals so long as he passed its test.

This destructive force sought to strike down his five elements mech with extreme prejudice!

Even though it was forced by its very nature to channel the power of creation through its potent attacks, Ves intuitively guessed that the tribulation lightning did not intend for the mech to exist long enough to enjoy its benefits!

Even though he was not the target of this lightning tribulation, Ves was able to understand what his mech was going through a lot better after he experienced this force in person.

His body had definitely incurred a bit of damage, his resilience was so high that Ves had no cause for concern.

Instead, Ves focused more on what happened to his body tissue after it got fried by the golden current.

His flesh and bones began to undergo a slow and subtle transformation. The parts of his body that sustained more severe damage exhibited a greater rebound as the raw power of creation directly nourished his organic cells and made them stronger in ways that he could not explain.

What was important to Ves was that he could sense that the phasewater in his blood had actually begun to increase!

Though the changes were extremely minor at this time, Ves deduced that subjecting himself to continuous lightning tribulations may be the most effective way for him to advance his body cultivation!

"That is not all." Ves grinned.

He was more than just a phase lord. His powerful spirituality that had already been tempered by a past lightning tribulation started to show more signs of strengthening.

Of course, his spirituality also sustained a nasty shock that caused him to feel pained down to his very soul, but once the power of creation started to do its work, Ves experienced a brief moment of ecstasy as he could feel that his glow had grown a little more powerful!

"Mrow mrow!"

Even his companion spirit benefited from this potent force!

Blinky even attempted to devour a tiny proportion of the golden current and dump it into his internal universe, but he failed in this attempt.

The power of lightning was too fleeting to get caught by Blinky's devouring ability!

Oh well.

"This is not enough. I need more stimulation to speed up the evolution of my body."

Ves used the interval between lightning bolts to alter the settings of his improvised arrangement.

When the next tribulation lightning struck, the cockpit lit up a lot brighter as a much stronger current ran through his body!

CRACK!

"AAHHH! THAT HURTS!"

His body was actually steaming as a substantial part of his palm looked like they had suffered nasty burns!

Ves blinked his eyes as he tried to regain his wits.

"Perhaps I went a little too far in the other direction. That was a bit too much."

"Meow!"

Lucky grew concerned at what Ves was doing to himself.

"I am fine! I will isolate the force a bit more so that I won't receive such a strong shock this time. By the way, you should come and have a taste of this lightning as well."

"Meow meow meow!"

"That's not true. It will be fine! Just try it out. You will become a lot stronger if you are willing to take the risk. At worst, you will just release whatever you are digesting at this moment."

"Meeeeooooow!"

CRACK!

"AHHH! That's it! That's the right amount of power! Come on, Lucky! If you miss out on this, who knows how long it will take for you to grow any stronger?"

It took a bit more cajoling, but Ves eventually persuaded Lucky to share the burden.

The gem cat reluctantly landed on Ves' shoulder and waited for the next strike to come.

Blinky was also trying to absorb more current.

CRACK!

"AAAAHI"

"MEEEEOOOWI"

"MROW!"

"Damnit, why has its power jumped by such a large extent?!"

Both mech designer and gem cat looked a little crispier now that they had received a stronger than average shock.

Major Jankowski had tried his best to resist the power of the lightning tribulation, but the antics of Ves added another burden to his mind!

Though Ves wanted to embrace the forces of destruction and creation that were working in tandem to promote his evolution, he did not forget about his primary responsibility.

He studied the projected control panel and figured out the current state of the Fey Project.

He also reached out with his spiritual senses to get a more intuitive sense of the flow of elemental energies that was constantly taking place in and around the mech frame.

Ves quickly concluded that Major Jankowski had followed his initial idea and sought to rely on a combination between metal and earth energies to reinforce the main body of the Fey Project.

Earth nourished metal, which caused the mech frame to get reinforced to an even greater extent!

In addition to that, earth energy had an excellent grounding effect on lightning, making it so that the tribulation lightning did not penetrate too much into the internals.

It was not completely effective, though. The lightning strikes possessed extraordinary properties that somehow caused every other attribute to suffer damage.

This was the power of supreme destruction!

While the Fey Project still sustained at least a bit of damage with every strike due to this reason, the strange reinforcement effect happened to be powerful enough to keep the armor of the mech in good shape for the time being.

The fact that his new mech was already able to do this was remarkable!

His five elements mech was finally beginning to make use of its potential, though there was still a lot more that could still be done.

CRACK!

"AHH!"

"MEEOW!"

"MROW!"

Lucky started to question whether it was a good idea for him to participate in Ves' latest bout of insanity.

This was pure torture!

The gem cat could not even tell whether his archemetal construction was improving in any way.

While Ves recovered from the latest strike, he received an urgent transmission from Jovy.

"We have consulted the opinion of several experts." Jovy quickly spoke. "Your new mech has been struck a dozen times so far, but that is just the beginning. They have estimated that this lightning tribulation will likely persist for at least 81 strikes. What is more pertinent is that the power and the form of the lightning strikes will become substantially more threatening after every 9 discharges. Some of our authoritative experts have even mentioned the possibility that even greater abnormalities may occur as this event proceeds further. The power of the final 9 strikes will be at least two orders of magnitude stronger than the first attack."

"What?!"

The first lightning strike was not that impressive, but an attack that was 100 times stronger was a different matter!

There was no way the Fey Project would be able to resist such an attack with its base functions alone, especially when it had already sustained heavy damage from all of the previous strikes!

Ves grew more and more discouraged at this situation. Though he did not want to give up, he knew that his five elements mech had to master its capabilities a lot faster in order to make it past the end!

CRACK!

"AAAAHHHH!"

"MEEOW!"

"MROOOW!"

"What are you doing, Ves?! Is it worth it for you to subject yourself to a part of the raw power of this lightning tribulation?"

"I know what I am doing, Jovy! Before you ask, I did not go crazy. What I am currently doing is completely logical!"

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"By the way, I want to ask you a question seeing that you are in contact with the experts of the Association. What is the origin of this lightning tribulation? Does it come from the Red Ocean, or..."

Jovy's expression became grim as he supplied the answer.

"The E energy radiation that has engulfed the Red Ocean originates from Messier 87. The lightning tribulation that has manifested above your base is an extension of that very same supermassive galaxy."

Jovy validated Ves' guess.

"Congratulations, Ves. You have become one of the few red humans to make direct contact with a powerful alien force that originates from Messier 87."

Chapter 5419 Race Against Time

It was impossible for the Devos Ancient Clan to miss the large and violent storm forming in the skies above New Constantinople VIII.

The dark and unnaturally powerful lightning storm covered a significant chunk of the surface of the planet!

Not only that, but the storm did not behave anything like a normal one, but instead discharged much of its concentrated energies at a single location.

It did not take much snooping to figure out what the storm was targeting.

"It's the aliens! We are being attacked by the aliens!"

"Our defense forces should be trying to blow these dark clouds away with explosives. We can't let them spread any further!"

"I know that place! The aliens have employed exotic weather technology to assassinate our guest professor. We need to send in our rapid responders to evacuate our honored galactic citizens right away!"

"Why are we not allowed to sortie? There is an emergency taking place outside. It is our duty as Terrans to respond to any disasters that take place within our jurisdiction. We are violating our oaths if we stay in our places."

"My apologies, captain, but these orders come straight from above. The Red Association has taken over all responsibility for this affair. The mechers have strictly prohibited us from approaching the storm clouds."

Not many local Terrans understood what was unfolding. They found it inexplicable that the Devos Ancient Clan had made no move to address the strange anomaly that had swept the skies of one of their most important planets.

However, a select few leaders had better awareness of what was taking place.

In the upper floor of an office building located inside the campus of the Eden Institute, Master Laila Rebecca Devos stared at the distant storm clouds with an expression that conveyed both astonishment and interest.

"This storm..."

As an esteemed Master Mech Designer from one of the oldest and most traditional ancient clans of Terra, Master Laila roughly knew what it took to trigger this kind of phenomenon.

It was not completely unheard of for an anomalous thunderstorm to occur, but they were so rare that the vast majority of people remained ignorant of what it represented.

Though Master Laila had become repeatedly impressed by the young new professor that her school had been fortunate enough to employ, she never expected him to be able to trigger such a vast and powerful storm at this stage in his career!

"He is just a Senior..." She uttered in a disbelieving tone. "Even if he is a seasoned masterwork mech designer, there is still a huge gap to reaching this threshold."

Ves Larkinson had already broken the assumptions that governed their profession once or twice. It shouldn't have been that much of a surprise for him to be able to do it again, especially since the Devos Ancient Clan had already deduced that he had access to an extraordinary heritage!

Still, the Devosans were in a similar position, but the people that had received the right to study the digital scans of those ancient and forgotten tomes had barely managed to decipher the overly cryptic words and archaic phrases that obfuscated their meaning.

It took a lot more research to convert the wisdom of the ancients into practical inventions and applications!

This was why Master Laila valued the young professor more and more.

The event unfolding in front of her caused her to step up her plans to deepen her ancient clan's relationship with the talented mech designer.

"Perhaps we should offer our guest an opportunity to teach a class related to hyper technology."

Professor Ves Larkinson clearly had a lot more wisdom to share if he was capable of triggering such a large-scale event.

Meanwhile, Alexa Streon tried her best to keep her emotions in check as she witnessed an extraordinary event of great import unfolding right outside of Diandi Base!

The calamitous storm clouds above everyone's heads had repeatedly thrown down lightning bolt after lightning bolt after a mech that had drawn their fury.

The unerring accuracy and target fixation of these lightning bolts clearly indicated that this was anything but a natural weather event.

Her observations supported this conclusion.

Her naked eyes did not reveal anything too unnatural, but her companion spirit's senses easily observed the huge amount of energies clashing against each other!

CRACK!

"Myah! Myah!"

The spiritual ragdoll cat looked frightened as her senses clearly caught a huge torrent of destructive energy slamming against the defenses of the new Fey Project!

The newly constructed mech for its part did not receive the attack without any preparation.

Instead, Maia was able to observe the extraordinary mech working to shape and control the energies related to the elements of metal and earth.

The modified Fey Project did not demonstrate any particular skill or direction at first. It was only later that the machine started to work more purposefully with the energies that came from the environment.

The E energies attributed towards metal constantly filled up the main mech frame in an attempt to amplify its defenses.

This was similar to how regular hyper technology worked, but Alexa knew that the newly fabricated mech should not contain enough metal-attributed hyper materials to take in so much energy.

She knew this because she had assisted Ves in the fabrication of his spontaneously redesigned drone mech!

"How?"

What she was witnessing broke the rules that she had learned in her studies on hyper technology.

What was more remarkable was the way in which the new mech had begun to make use of all of the earth energy.

The mech channeled a part of this energy into itself, boldly forcing it to crash and merge with the prevailing metal energy.

Metal and earth energies shared a well-known synergistic relationship that had been officially registered in the Red Association's database.

However, most hyper tech applications related to combining these two elemental forces usually had to be designed and built in advance.

Alexa knew for certain that the Fey Project did not contain any mixed parts or systems of that nature, but it was somehow able to harness the two distinct energies through conscious manipulation!

It actually reminded her a lot of how the Ouroboros was able to combine the power of creation and destruction to produce special compound effects.

The difference was that the Ouroboros was a powerful ace mech, while the new Fey Project was just supposed to be a standard mech!

The latter shouldn't have been able to manipulate these kinds of energies in such a freehand manner, but the new Fey Project somehow managed to do so with the help of its earth fey.

"Is this the true power of living mechs?" She wondered.

It was impossible for the mech pilot to be able to accomplish this feat. Her work station had extensive access to the telemetry transmitted by the new machine. The resonance meters did not detect any manifestations of true resonance, and Major Simon Jankowski was clearly not a high-ranking mech pilot.

It should have been impossible for a well-trained but purely mortal mech pilot to be able to wield serious amounts of E energies to such a degree!

The only answer that made sense was that the mech was doing the heavy lifting. Alexa was able to corroborate this guess through Maia's observation.

Each time the surrounding E energies tried to accomplish a specific purpose, it was because of the control exerted by the new mech and its fey.

The logic was clear, but that made it so difficult for Alexa to accept.

Before she became familiar with the Larkinsons and their impressive patriarch, the only mech she was familiar with that could perform this feat was the Ouroboros!

Even then, her grandfather and the many archival records of his battles indicated that it took several decades of growth for this initially weak machine to become so powerful at harnessing specific energies.

"This mech is not even more than an hour old..." She whispered to herself.

That was what boggled her mind the most. She learned from Ves that every living mech started out as babies more or less. Even the rare and much more capable third order living mechs were still considered juveniles relative to their lengthy life cycles.

The mech in front of her was clearly supposed to be a third order living mech that had only received a modest boost in aging with the help of her new companion spirit, but even then it should have only become equivalent to an adolescent.

Now, this young and tender mech was already demonstrating the strength and control far beyond its years!

Alexa realized that her new mentor and employer had managed to make a boundary-crossing product.

This was a standard mech that somewhat imitated the capabilities of an expert mech, all without an expert pilot in the cockpit!

If Ves completely mastered the design and fabrication of such an outrageously powerful and cost-effective machine, he would be capable of producing many more copies of this extraordinary drone mech!

With the unprecedentedly large potential and effective combat power demonstrated by this new mech, Ves could easily raise entire troops of 'false expert mechs' that could defeat any opponent with just a fraction of the numbers!

"Such a rule-breaking mech shouldn't exist!" She gasped.

Alexa instinctively figured out why an astonishingly powerful thunderstorm had formed immediately after the mech had reached completion.

Perhaps this was the cosmos taking action to destroy this heretical creation before it could upset the balance of this plain of existence.

All other standard mechs would become obsolete overnight if it was possible to mass produce this kind of miracle!

CRACK!

Another golden lightning bolt shot at the mech from above.

Its power had increased at a worrying rate, causing the previous defensive measures to endure greater stress.

The Fey Project had cleverly manipulated the earth energies to form shabby and malformed lightning rods.

Though the extraordinary lightning bolts did not completely behave as expected, the lightning rods still managed to divert at least a part of the disastrous power, enabling the metal-reinforced mech to withstand the remaining current with greater ease.

However, the Fey Project did not settle for its current solutions, but worked hard to explore newer and more diverse applications of the energies at its disposal.

"Myah."

"Is that... a Faraday cage?"

CRACK!

The attempt to create a grill out of a combination of metal and earth energies looked ingenious, but when a more powerful golden lightning bolt violently made contact with it, the Faraday cage exploded in an instant!

Perhaps the idea was good, but the Fey Project and its pilot were still too inexperienced and lacking skill to succeed in their attempts.

It was a fairly creative idea, though. The mech under duress was already attempting to form a thicker and more solid energy barrier, but the ephemeral and insubstantial nature of E energy made it difficult to shape them into a desired form!

"This is a race against time." She whispered.

The Fey Project was too weak to withstand the unending barrage of lightning bolts by relying on its quasi-first-class mech systems.

Its only chance of survival was to become more proficient at harnessing the power of E energy.

While it was doing a decent job at that so far, the difficulty of mastering more effective applications was much greater!

Would the mech be able to learn these stronger methods quickly enough to make it all the way to the end?

Even Alexa did not dare to be too optimistic!

"Can you produce another miracle, Professor Ves?"

That was the only factor that she could think of that might reverse the current trend.

Whether Ves would be able to subvert everyone's expectations and save his latest work from utter annihilation was still in doubt.

However, she had already learned to never rule out any options when it came to her new patriarch.

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However, she had already learned to never rule out any options when it came to her new patriarch.

One of the defining traits of an excellent mech designer was to turn the impossible into a reality.

No matter the outcome of this day, Ves would definitely become known as a mech designer who had broken the boundaries of reality!

Chapter 5420 Multi-modal

"This lightning isn't behaving like lightning." Ves cursed as he shook off the effects of his latest shock massage. "It is messing up my calculations!"

He had been trying to come up with suggestions on how to resist the lightning bolts that were growing ever stronger.

Major Jankowski and the Fey Project had managed to figure out numerous tricks that helped with preserving the integrity of the main body.

However, neither of them possessed the expertise or imagination to formulate more advanced combinations.

Ves originally devised this remarkable variation of his Fey Project as a living machine that could naturally harness the power of all five elements at once.

Yet just because it was born with the potential to do so did not necessarily mean it was ready to manipulate all of those elemental E energies like an ancient spiritual sorcerer.

A part of Ves felt disappointed at himself for bringing such a flawed product to life.

The deviant Fey Project possessed the greatest potential on completion out of every other mech that he had developed, yet its shortcomings in other areas dragged it down.

The clear spiritual immaturity and lack of spiritual strength meant that his latest work was like a third-class mech pilot who had entered the cockpit of a first-class multipurpose mech!

Even though the latter was powerful enough to destroy a small and relatively weak alien warship by itself, the handicap imposed by a weak and unqualified mech pilot meant that its effective strength was only a miniscule fraction of its theoretical maximum!

Right now, Ves loosely estimated that the five elements mech was only operating at way less than 1 percent of its attainable maximum potential.

This was an extremely bad utilization rate, because he guessed that in order to survive all 81 lightning strikes, his Fey Project had to activate at least 30 percent of its potential to withstand the onslaught from above.

If the lightning tribulation progressed at a rate that was way beyond his expectations, then perhaps the Fey Project would not be able to make it out alive unless it activated 80 percent of its potential!

This was a ludicrously high rate and could only be attained through decades of constant practice.

Ves did not dare to think too much in this direction. He could only think about what was in front of him. So long as he kept coming up with effective solutions that enabled his new creation to merge the power of the five elements in more effective ways, his mech should be able to get ahead of the curve!

CRACK!

"AHH!"

"Sir, your demands are becoming more difficult to fulfill." Major Jankowski spoke as he endured greater and greater strain. "The mech is doing its best to increase its reach and strength over the E energies under its control, but it is too hard to do both at the same time. It is easier to focus on accomplishing one or the other."

"No! That is not good enough." Ves vigorously shook his head. "This lightning tribulation won't let the Fey Project survive if it does that. The only way for it to survive long enough to resist all 81 lightning strikes is to quickly boost the quantity and quality of its energy control abilities. The living mech and its fey can do it. I know what they are capable of, and together they can produce amazing synergies so long as they work hard enough."

"What do they need to do then to make that happen?" The mech officer asked.

Ves thought quickly. The operation of the Fey Project was similar to a qi cultivator, so it may be best to employ the same methods.

"The best way for them to increase their control is if they fixate on a strong image of what they want to accomplish. The power of imagination is their best hope. It is not enough to move the elemental E energies around. They must convince themselves that they can form more advanced energy constructs! It is best if they imagine themselves as strong entities that are capable of wielding these energies with the ease of a god."

"This mech is too new to possess a strong identity." Jankowski retorted. "It doesn't even have a name for itself."

"Then we should correct-" CRACK! "-OUCH! I mean, we should fix that immediately!"

They both tried to come up with a few names. Time was of the essence so neither of them could come up with anything too imaginative.

"What about the Elemental Lord?" The RA mech officer proposed. "The living mech likes the image that the phrase evokes in my mind. It wants to attain complete dominance over the five elements."

Ves did not look surprised when he heard that. He pretty much conveyed the same goal into his work when he developed it during his inspired state.

"Elemental Lord is as good as any. Try and encourage the Fey Project to believe in the fantasy that this name evokes."

Just as he wanted to say more, the nature of the storm changed drastically.

Ves had already expected that the next lightning bolt would be different. He had already adjusted the settings in order to substantially decrease the amount of current that would be running through his improvised arrangement.

This was because the newly christened Elemental Lord had already been struck 18 times!

The exterior of the machine looked a lot more scorched and battleworn than before. The strong armor affixed to its humanoid head and upper shoulders had clearly seen better days as the excessive heat and energy from the tribulation all caused them to melt and deform.

Ves initially expected that the storm clouds would spit out a lightning bolt that was up to 50 percent stronger than before, but it actually started to accumulate more charge into its clouds, causing it to get riddled by golden flashes!

What was happening?

It was Jovy who cleared up his confusion.

"This is bad, Ves! All signs indicate that this is a multi-modal lightning tribulation. That means that after every round of 9 strikes, there is a chance that the next round will test the target in a radically different way."

"What?! Why would it do that?!"

"There are a lot of possible theories behind it, but a well-regarded one proposes that mixing up the attack methods will prevent the target from relying on a single excellent countermeasure. In the case of a mech, we have a large degree of confidence that the current tribulation will test its attack, defense and mobility capabilities. Your work cannot be allowed to have a shortcoming in any of these areas!"

Ves became shocked at this. Were lightning tribulations so sophisticated nowadays, or was this a unique trait of the ones sent by Messier 87?

"Meow meow meow!"

Lucky reacted with alarm as the storm clouds from above finally sent down the 19th 'strike'!

Instead of launching a straightforward lightning bolt that attempted to strike the Elemental Lord in an instant, a large quantity of thin golden bolts had condensed into the shape of hundreds of birds.

Yes, birds!

"This is impossible!"

Lightning bolts shouldn't be able to condense into such stable forms except if they were forcibly willed into existence by high-ranking mech pilots, but the tribulation brought them into existence anyway!

The air became a lot more charged with energy now that those ominous energy birds left the clouds.

Loud sounds of chirping filled up the entire space, forcing Major Jankowski to reduce the sensitivity of the audible sensors.

"They're coming down!"

"Shoot them down! Use wide area fire attacks if possible!" Ves quickly urged.

"The lightning birds are closing in too quickly! The fire fey is working as fast as it can to produce the right attacks, but there is not enough time!"

"Damn!"

The Elemental Lord had no choice but to rely on its existing arrangements to withstand this wave of attacks.

As a drone mech, its primary weapons consisted of its spurs. The fire fey was equipped with a small luminar crystal cannon while the earth fey was armed with a compact gauss cannon.

Both weapon systems were most suited to fire against single targets, but that happened to be the least effective way to shoot down all of these lightning birds, especially when they spread out and surrounded the Elemental Lord from multiple directions.

"Activate the azure energy shield!"

The powerful transphasic hyper energy shield came online just in time for dozens of lightning birds to crash right against the newly formed barrier!

Alarms blared inside the cockpit as the large quantity of crashing lightning birds rapidly drained the integrity of this powerful shield.

Ves grew horrified at how quickly these small birds stressed the defenses of the shield.

The lightning rods and other defenses generated by the earth fey were not as effective in diverting the power of these strikes away from the mech frame.

The birds were just too damn nimble and flexible!

By the time the last batch of lightning birds attempted to overload the failing azure energy shield, Jankowski skillfully forced it to shut down at the final moment, thereby preventing the crucial generator from enduring excessive strain.

Though it would definitely take a while for the shield generator to recover from the earlier stresses, it would still be able to do its job somewhat well.

Bzzt! Bzzzt! Bzzzt!

When the final surviving lightning birds struck the Elemental Lord, they targeted multiple different sections, causing vulnerable modules and the rear section to sustain moderate damage.

"Ahh-Ahh-Ahh!"

"Meow-meow-meow!"

Ves and Lucky briefly became subjected to a pulsing lighting massage. The effect was quite different from a single big shock.

Though Ves was able to endure this round of shocks with relative ease, he was not so sure his body would be able to hold out as well if all of those birds successfully managed to strike the Elemental Lord in quick succession!

Major Jankowski grimaced as he studied the condition of his mech. "Most of our systems are still in good condition, but repeated attacks will definitely wear them down. What is worse is that our azure energy shield is down for the time being."

"We cannot stay in one place." Ves concluded. "Previously, the tribulation only struck our mech with an instant lightning bolt with perfect accuracy, so it was useless to move. This time, those lightning birds are not moving nearly as fast, so you should be able to kite them and drag out their approach. This will help us cope with the next attack."

Chirp! Chirp! Chirp! Chirp!

The thunderstorm had unleashed another wave of lightning birds!

These ones looked a little larger and brighter than the ones that came before. The punishment they could inflict had undoubtedly increased!

The Elemental Lord no longer acted like a target dummy, though. Under the excellent control of Major Jankowski, the mech and its accompanying fey launched into the air and started to move away from Diandi Base.

The mech needed a lot of maneuvering room in order to address this latest crisis!

As the Elemental Lord boosted away, the lightning birds still moved fast enough for them to be able to catch up to the speeding machine.

However, their net movement speed had dropped to such an extent that the Elemental Lord was able to launch a lot of shots at the pursuing energy birds!

The fire fey and the earth fey both shot purple fire beams and transphasic hyper projectiles respectively.

Meanwhile, the main body itself contributed as well by firing hyper laser beams from its relatively slim luminar crystal rifle.

It would have been difficult to kill more than one bird at a time with every attack, but because the movement trajectory of the Elemental Lord forced the lightning birds to compress and narrow their formation, every shot managed to eliminate three to five birds at once!

"Yes! It is working!"

Only a fraction of the birds were left by the time they closed in and collided against the main body of the Elemental Lord.

"Ah-Ah-Ah-Ah!"

"Meow- meow- meow- meow!"