

The Mech 5421

Chapter 5421 Adding Fuel to the Fire

The lightning birds actually inflicted considerably more damage to the components of the Elemental Lord while the machine was in flight.

The lack of grounding caused the golden current to bounce around inside the mech frame a lot longer, thereby disrupting the internals to a considerably greater extent!

If not for the fact that every lightning bird not only carried the power of destruction but also the power of creation, the repeated strikes would have caused the vulnerable internal systems to fail a lot sooner!

Even so, the restorative effects of the tribulation lightning only provided the greatest benefits when the mech components only sustained light to moderate damage.

Any part that had either broken down completely or sustained serious damage could not be magically restored to full functionality again!

All of this meant that in order for the Elemental Lord to strengthen its capabilities and survive to the very end, it had to repeatedly expose its mech frame to a relatively controlled amount of tribulation lightning.

Blocking everything might be good in the short run, but it would doom the drone mech at the later stages of this lightning tribulation!

Allowing the Elemental Lord to get struck by powerful current in every wave would definitely boost its strength at the highest possible rate, but its parts would collapse too quickly before it could get past the first three or four rounds.

The living mech that aspired to dominate the elements had to strike a careful balance in order to meet both its short term and long term needs!

Ves, Major Jankowski and the Elemental Lord quickly shared their own conclusions with each other.

"You need to land the Elemental Lord to the ground when the birds are just about to hit." Ves quickly advised.

"Good idea. The earth fey's ammunition reserves are too limited. It is best to save the remaining rounds for later."

"You are right about your concerns, but I have made sure to stock up on a lot of additional rounds back in Diandi Base. I originally procured them in order to provide enough ammunition to conduct extensive tests, but they can provide handy reloads for us. I can instruct my assistant to ship them over. The earth fey should be able to load the magazines by itself. I purposefully designed it this way to prolong its usefulness on the battlefield."

That relieved a major concern for Major Jankowski. He was afraid that the small earth fey would only be able to make use of its weapon system for a short amount of time.

Chirp! Chirp! Chirp! Chirp!

"The next wave is coming!"

Ves used his access to the Elemental Lord's systems to study the properties of the noticeably larger swarm of lightning birds.

Not only had every energy bird grown a little more powerful than before, but their quantity had also increased by 30 percent from the last wave!

This was a significant finding because the 20th wave had also been 30 percent more numerous than the 19th wave.

If this compounding pattern continued all the way to the 27th wave, then the storm clouds would spit out so many lightning birds that they would blanket the skies!

Ves couldn't imagine how the current state of the Elemental Lord could possibly resist such a wave of attacks!

He felt a much greater sense of urgency. The Elemental Lord needed to utilize its power of the elements in an offensive capacity a lot better in order to deal with the next waves!

At this time, the Elemental Lord followed the same strategy as before and sought to kite the incoming lightning birds while launching repeated ranged attacks.

That was not all. Both Major Jankowski and the Elemental Lord knew they had to do better in order to stay ahead of the curve.

The fire fey was working hard to control more fire-attributed E energy, but it became a lot harder to do so while it was on the move!

"Use the wood fey to assist the fire fey." Ves quickly advised.

The wood fey was a little odd compared to the rest. Ves had not been able to figure out a spur configuration that corresponded with its element.

After all, who would be crazy enough to use wood in a metallic mech?

There were only a few variations of tree species that could produce wood that was strong enough to be utilized in high-end mechs, but their rarity was too high.

Ves had decided to pair the wood fey with a space suppressor in order to play a constricting role on the battlefield.

The space suppressor served no particular use at this time. The lightning tribulation did not rely on any notable spatial effects, so there was nothing for the wood fey to suppress.

However, that also left the wood fey free to utilize its power over wood-attributed energy to a greater degree.

It just so happened that the lands surrounding Diandi Base happened to be filled with grassy plains and patches of forests.

Most of the flora consisted of fast-growing, genetically modified plant species.

That did not change the fact that all of this greenery attracted a lot of nature energy.

In fact, certain species of plants had even started to mutate into more extraordinary species due to continuous exposure to E energy radiation, causing them to release significantly more wood energy as a result!

All of this provided an environment where the wood fey felt a lot more at home. There was a significantly greater quantity of wood energy for it to manipulate, and right now the living fey tried to channel as much of it as possible to the fire fey with the intent to add more fuel to the fire.

It took a while, but once enough wood fey got fed to the fire fey, the latter finally managed to produce a small purple conflagration as soon as it fired another purple fire beam!

"We succeeded!"

The fire energies attracted by the fire fey successfully ignited and started to burn a quarter of the lightning birds that had come close to reaching their target.

While the strange tribulation lightning manifestations were able to withstand light hits, the purple flames happened to be damaging enough to pop the birds in just a short moment of contact.

In the end, the surviving lightning birds of the 21th wave had dwindled to a smaller quantity than before, which was just enough to give the Elemental Lord another dose of creative destruction!

Ves' hair turned more and more frazzled as over a dozen small golden currents ran through his body.

"Meow-meow-meow!"

Lucky looked a little rattled as well as his archetech body began to absorb part of the power of the tribulation lightning!

Though Ves did not spot any obvious changes to his gem cat, he was sure that Lucky was benefiting from this exposure.

"The next wave is already coming." Major Jankowski warned.

The 22nd tribulation attack looked a lot more intimidating than before. Just as expected, there were 30 percent more lightning birds from the last wave, and each individual manifestation also happened to be a little stronger as well!

The sheer quantity of lightning birds started to form an oppressive aura that pressed down on the Elemental Lord.

However, the newly born mech seemed to know no fear. It clung to its identity as a master of the five elements and sought to take down even more birds this time!

The drone mech and its spurs had begun to kite the lightning birds like before. Energy beams along with the occasional physical round slammed against numerous birds at once as they seemed to squeeze into a line in their efforts to intercept their target.

The intelligence of these birds was not high, and their speed remained relatively constant as well.

This made it easier for Major Jankowski and the Elemental Lord to exploit the lightning birds.

Many birds fell from the repeated attacks, but many more were still in the process of closing the distance.

Ves already calculated that the Elemental Lord was bound to suffer more serious damage if it could not eliminate most of these birds!

"You need to produce a flame this time! It is best if you can turn it into a living form that can actively move around and burn more lightning birds."

"We are already working on it, sir!" Major Jankowski responded. "It is far more difficult to accomplish this than we thought. I do not think we will be able to present our new solution in time to defend against this wave!"

The birds eventually arrived so quickly that the fire fey was forced to fall back on producing simple flames that were fueled by wood energy.

Though the purple fire that exploded to life in front of the Elemental Lord was bigger this time, the lightning birds annoyingly did not maintain their impromptu column formation but actively spread out in a hemisphere pattern!

This meant that the purple flame only took down 40 percent of the lightning birds, leaving the remainder to strike against the main mech!

"Use the fey to block a part of the birds!"

The Elemental Lord had abruptly landed on the ground this time. The fey hurriedly converged and blocked the direct paths to the most important and vulnerable exterior modules.

The fey did their jobs. Though their relatively small silhouettes meant that they could only block a small amount of lightning birds, that was good because their damage tolerance was a lot lower.

"Meow-meow-meow-meeeeooow!"

The quantity of birds that made it through was still a bit worrisome, and their small increase in power also had a stronger adverse effect on the mech frame.

Ves shook his head to clear the noise in his head.

"We cannot use the same response to resist the next wave of attacks. Too many birds will get through if that is the case. The fire fey needs to have a better solution available right away!"

"We are still working on it, sir, but the fire fey is confident he will be ready this time."

When the 23rd wave of attacks launched from the storm clouds, the quantity of lightning birds generated a significantly greater aura of oppression.

Ordinary individuals would have become paralyzed with fear if they became subjected to this effect!

Ves grew a lot more concerned, but when the lightning birds finally came close enough, the fire fey harnessed more fire energy than ever while the wood fey provided as much support as possible!

Their combined efforts finally produced a more notable result than before because a relatively small but concentrated purple phoenix emerged in front of the incoming birds!

Although it was not a real phoenix, the fire construct was just realistic enough to fly and actively hunt down every lightning bird within reach!

A lot more of the birds fell prey to the purple phoenix as the latter moved under the fire fey's direction.

With a constant supply of wood energy feeding the flames, the purple phoenix did not have to worry about burning out for a short while!

However, the strain of keeping this aggressive phoenix active and under control was taking a severe toll on the young and weak fire fey.

The phoenix abruptly dissipated after it had flown a bit too far away, but by now the quantity of lightning birds was just a fraction as much as before.

"Meow-meow-meow-meow!"

Ves grinned through the pain. He became jubilant when he saw that his Elemental Lord had successfully harnessed the power of the elements in a more effective way.

While there was still a long way to go to make it to the end, his new mech at least showed that it was capable of improving quickly!

At the same time, his jolts of tribulation lightning was actively strengthening his body, mind and spirit in small increments. Ves could clearly sense that his body was somehow growing larger and more massive without actually looking any different.

This was a sign that he was slowly making progress in his phase lord cultivation, all without needing to absorb any additional phasewater or biomass!

Perhaps normal phase whales and phase lords needed to supplement their physical growth with a huge amount of resources, but somehow Ves was exempt from this rule.

He did not have the time to figure out why this was the case.

He was much more concerned about whether the Elemental Lord could produce an even larger phoenix next time.

"It's coming again! Get ready!"

Chapter 5422 Birth of the Five Brothers

From the moment it gained awareness, its body had not yet been completed.

The line between sapience and non-sapience was difficult to define. All the living mech knew was that it had gradually become more and more aware of itself and its existence over a span of many hours.

In a mech workshop that felt as warm and nurturing as the womb of a real organism, a life slowly came into being.

That was not all.

The living mech... was not alone. Its creation became accompanied by the creation of several sub-entities in the form of its fey.

As a mech designed to deploy spurs into battle, the four fey came into existence in a similar fashion to the main body of the Fey Project!

An amalgamation like this had never been brought to life in the past.

This was the first time that the creator had ever developed a mech that contained multiple personalities from the onset.

This was a deviation from the norm and the birth of a new sub-category of living mechs!

The new mech inherently understood the context and the significance behind its birth. The machine was brought to life by its own mech designer, who did not hesitate to channel all of his desires and expectations into his own work!

As such, the emerging living mech deeply became proud of its own special existence. It was not only one of the few living mechs that had been handmade by its designer from beginning to end, but it was also bestowed with the components that would allow it to wield great power in the future!

The main personality of the mech possessed a strong innate relationship with metal. Almost every component that was added to his frame consisted of one powerful alloy or another.

Mechs already shared a special relationship with metal as most of them were made by this material. It was no coincidence that its creator had designated the metal element as the root of the new machine!

The main body not only became tougher as a consequence, but also gained an additional form of authority and control over its fey!

The four sub-personalities that came to life at the same time as the main one were all lesser and weaker in comparison.

It couldn't be helped as their smaller and weaker bodies provided less capacity than the main mech frame.

An inherent hierarchy had already formed between the five personalities. Despite their exceedingly short existences, they already understood in their very hearts that their creator had determined this in advance.

The metal personality was in charge while the other four elemental personalities were destined to be its followers!

This was backed up by many factors. It was not just because the metal personality was stronger and mastered an element that granted greater authority over the fey.

An additional reason why the metal personality was destined to become the leader of this brood was because it would be the one to interact directly with its mech pilot!

From the moment a pilot established the man-machine connection, he or she would form a direct connection with the main body of the Fey Project, thereby enabling them to attain a whole new level of mutual understanding and cooperation.

This alone made it so that the metal personality gained primacy over its siblings. The other elemental personalities all understood this truth and did not fight against their own lot.

They were born into their own roles. It would be silly for them to be dissatisfied by their own nature of existence. Their creator endowed them with life, and that was already precious enough!

Besides, the spurs were not completely independent and separate from the main personality.

While they all possessed their own thoughts and identities, they were similar to siblings that came from the same womb.

Each of them were permanently linked to each other. They inherently knew that they were meant to work and fight as a team. Each of them would become much more diminished if they were ever left to operate by themselves.

Just the very thought of getting permanently separated from each other frightened these young and tender personalities!

None of them knew whether the living fey were separate life forms that had been grafted to the main body or whether they were originally whole but got split up by their progenitor.

All they knew was that as soon as they came to life as one interconnected package, they were destined to advance and retreat as a permanent union!

While their maker steadily brought each fey into completion, their hierarchy became more defined as they settled the order of seniority by the order of their individual completion.

The metal personality was the oldest and most authoritative among them. He claimed the title of the first brother as it was his birthright to be in charge over the living fey!

The water personality was the initial fey that their maker brought to life. He was born to be a protector as he carried a smaller version of an azure energy shield generator inside his weaponless construction. There was no dispute that he earned the title of becoming the second brother!

The earth personality was born with a sense of mass and solidity that the other fey lacked. He was larger, heavier and slower than the other fey because he was made to squeeze as much ammunition in his limited construction as possible. The fey possessed the strongest punch of all as his gauss cannon was designed to fire expensive but exceptionally powerful transphasic hyper rounds. He adopted his identity as the third brother with pride!

The fire personality inherited much of the fiery passion of his progenitor! He was the only living fey that carried a fourth generation lumina crystal cannon, a weapon that was also developed by his maker! This caused the fire fey to develop a much higher sense of worth than the other living fey. He was deeply annoyed that he was the second-to-last fey to reach completion. It was an injustice for him to be assigned the identity of the fourth brother!

The wood personality was the youngest and last to come to life. His role in battle was also the least glamorous among them all. Whereas the second brother possessed the strongest defenses and the other two fey possessed the ability to go on the offensive, the wood fey could only play a role in battle by activating his space suppressor. Fortunately, the youngest fey was fine with being relegated to a support function. There was no shame in relying on his older stronger brothers to carry the fight. He accepted his designation as the fifth brother without any issue.

Together, the five siblings formed a completely novel and innovative brotherhood that combined all of their separate elemental affinities together in a single living mech!

From the moment that their progenitor had completed the final step, they embraced the purpose of their making and entered into their lives with the determination to make their progenitor proud!

"Our legend begins."

"So this is what it is like to be alive!"

"The elements shall obey our orders."

"Let us fight together, brothers!"

"We are destined to evolve into the lords of the elements!"

Their creator endowed them with so much sustenance that the five brothers couldn't help but have high hopes for their own lives.

As one of the strongest and most remarkable mechs to be brought to life, they were destined to be treated as valuable artifacts by whoever was lucky enough to field them into battle.

No matter whether they were allowed to serve in their maker's clan or the much more powerful Red Association, the five brothers were fine with either possibility!

After all, both organizations had their own merits.

The Larkinson Clan allowed them to receive the care of their progenitor and become a part of the vibrant community that consisted of many fellow living mechs. The clan was the mecca for their, and its secret community of living mechs was led by multiple strong and established personalities such as the Quint, the Everchanger and the Minerva!

The Red Association was the largest and strongest mech-oriented organization in this dwarf galaxy. Only the mechers would be able to materially upgrade the elemental Fey Project to the highest extent possible. In addition to that, only they would be able to deploy the five brothers in the most intense battles against the most formidable alien warfleets!

The five brothers embraced their lives with boundless dreams and endless expectations for the future.

Yet just as they started to settle into their new existences, volatile elemental energies had already begun to clash in and around their metal shells!

"We need to stop our energies from colliding against each other!" The metal personality exclaimed.

"How do we do that, first brother?"

"We must bring order to the chaos. Follow my lead. Each of you is born with the power to control the energy that corresponds to your native element. Make use of your birthright and bring these disobedient elements to heel!"

Unfortunately, it was easier said than done. The five brothers possessed the will, but not the corresponding strength and experience. They repeatedly fumbled in their attempts to control the elements.

If not for the timely assistance provided by a strange spiritual cat, the five brothers would have never grown quickly enough to impose at least a bit of order to all of the elemental E energies!

Yet as soon as the five brothers managed to establish a somewhat stable equilibrium, calamity had struck as the very skies above the cradle of their birth darkened in preparation for exact punishment!

Each of the five brothers felt targeted by the overpowering tribulation that directed all of its hatred towards their tender existences.

The overbearing intent and malice directed by the fermenting storm made it clear that this supremely powerful force could not tolerate the birth of a mech that inherently harnessed the five elements!

The five brothers immediately became frightened by the fact that their brief lives might already come to a premature end.

However, these hopeful living entities refused to accept imposed by the entity that was looming over their heads!

"Why must we die before we can properly live?!"

"Our progenitor has created us with the purpose to live and serve our pilots. No other authority is allowed to interfere with our mission and the reason for our existence!"

"What is this lightning tribulation and why do we have to surrender ourselves to its judgment? I refuse to accept a verdict from a foreign and unrelated intelligence!"

"We have a fight on our hands, brothers. We must fight to prove our right to exist!"

"We must defy the heavens by using the power of elements. Let us strengthen our control over our energies and break this storm by relying on our own talents!"

The five brothers inherited the bravery and defiant character of their progenitor. Each of them did not even think about accepting a verdict issued from above.

Each living personality had begun to cultivate their own customized variations of the Greater Larkinson Metal Guardian Mantra, allowing them to absorb or control the elemental E energies to a greater extent!

CRACK!

As the first golden lightning bolts struck the main body, the five brothers became outraged by the attacks and immediately sought to channel their growing fury into their efforts to tame the elements.

They initially thought that they had to withstand the storm by themselves, but they soon received a huge boost of encouragement when the humans came to help them as well!

It was not a surprise that they received a powerful mech pilot that quickly learned how to pilot the five elements mech.

What did manage to catch them off-guard was that their progenitor himself had entered the cockpit of the main body!

The mech designer had proved with his own actions that he believed in his own creations with all of his heart and soul!

Not only did the five brothers register the overflowing love and confidence from their most honored maker, but they also gained a strong sense of responsibility.

No matter what, they could not allow the storm to threaten their progenitor's life!

Either they would succeed and keep their maker safe, or they would sacrifice their lives while doing their utmost to prevent him from sharing the same fate!

No other outcome was acceptable!

Chapter 5423 The Power of Three

The field outside Diandi Base had become a spectacle that attracted countless eyes!

Although the local authorities did not announce or broadcast the anomalous weather event to the public, certain members of high society with excellent connections received word of what was happening and secretly paid a lot of attention to the unfolding tribulation.

Many of them became impressed by what they saw. This seemingly weak standard mech began to display increasingly more strength. It wielded the power of all five classical elements in stronger and more skillful ways.

The more the unnaturally powerful thunderstorm tried to destroy the mech, the more the latter sought to defy its fate!

The observers who possessed the deepest understanding of mechs could clearly sense the will and desire emanating from the living mech!

The mech had received the blessing of life, and it wanted to do its utmost to defend this precious gift and prevent the unknowable power from above from cutting off its story before it had properly begun!

The Elemental Lord was partially a misnomer.

The five elements mech encompassed five distinct living entities, each of which had taken on a masculine bent for various reasons.

The living mech and the living fey all regarded each other as fellow brothers who were destined to live and die as a single entity.

In this regard, they were connected enough to each other that they could be treated as a single package.

None of them were allowed to die alone!

The only acceptable way for them to survive this massive was to band together and fight against the storm that sought to disintegrate their entire being!

Chirp! Chirp! Chirp! Chirp! Chirp! Chirp!

At this moment, a torrent of lightning birds closed in on the fleeing drone mech and tried to envelop their prey from multiple angles.

"Fourth brother, burn as much as you can! We cannot let so many birds get through."

"I am trying, but my phoenix is not large enough! I need more fuel to feed its flames."

"I have already reached my limit." The fifth brother helplessly spoke. "I am trying as hard as I can to extract more wood energy from the surrounding terrain, but there is only so much that can be done."

The fiery purple phoenix circling around the Elemental Lord uttered a silent cry before diving forward with blazing momentum.

A trail of purple flames briefly lingered after its passage, enabling the phoenix to form narrow walls of flames that burned dozens if not hundreds of lightning birds in quick succession!

However, no matter how many lightning birds got caught by the hot and deadly fires, their flexibility and numbers were too much to handle!

Hundreds more birds easily managed to flank around the purple phoenix and the trails of fire that it left behind.

Handfuls of lightning birds still disappeared from existence when they got shot by the weapons discharge of the luminar crystal rifle along with the smaller weapon systems built into the fire fey and the earth fey.

Nonetheless, way too many lightning birds successfully managed to close the distance, thereby putting the Elemental Lord in serious danger!

Major Jankowski did his utmost to mitigate the bird bombardment. He not only landed his mech on the ground, but also instructed the four fey to use their modest bulk to shield the more vulnerable parts such as the flight system and the luminar crystal rifle.

Crack! Crack! Crack! Crack! Crack! Crack!

Even so, the drone mech still endured hundreds of continuous hits, causing them to scorch and weaken the transphasic hyper armor plating while doing greater damage to the exterior and internal modules!

The cockpit not only blared with alarms as several minor components had begun to fail due to the excess quantity of currents introduced to by the rapid discharges, but also lit up due to the golden shocks inflicted on the body of the mech designer who refused to let his living creations suffer this punishment alone!

Ves had already grown a bit numb to the continuous pain roaring from his overloaded nerves.

This wave of lightning impacts was worse than anything the Elemental Lord suffered before, which meant that Ves' body suffered significantly greater abuse!

His body began to release an acrid form of smoke as small parts of his body had carbonized.

However, his body had gained a huge amount of resilience that was far in excess of any human. Only the most abnormal designer babies could compare to him in his ability to resist damage, and he was already starting to outpace those abnormal freaks!

His hair looked like a complete mess at this time. His skin had darkened and looked like they had turned into a desert landscape.

Nonetheless, there was an inner vitality in his body that was constantly growing stronger in order to replenish the physical damage to his physique.

Though Ves deeply understood that he was growing stronger in many ways, his mind was deeply concerned about the state of the Elemental Lord.

The 25th wave that his latest creation had just managed to endure inflicted notable damage to the internals!

Though the Elemental Lord was constructed well enough to retain most of its combat capabilities, Ves knew that the mech's performance would drop a lot more seriously if it endured an identical wave of attacks!

The 26th wave of tribulation attacks was bound to become more difficult to overcome.

They needed to do better in order to preserve their chance of making it to the end!

They could not allow the Elemental Lord to falter when they weren't even half-way to making it through this event!

As soon as Ves managed to regain control, he immediately studied the internal condition of the Elemental Lord and rapidly formulated a damage control plan.

Ves transmitted a short set of instructions to his gem cat.

"Lucky, I need you to dive back in and remove or alter these components."

"Meow!"

"If you don't do as I say, this mech will fall apart in the next few waves of attacks!"

"Meow..."

Lucky did not argue much further as he knew that the Elemental Lord was having a hard time.

Ves meanwhile utilized his cranial implant to directly tweak the settings of the drone mech. There was still much he could do to optimize the performance of the Elemental Lord.

However, Ves knew that this was far from enough to give his mech a chance to make it past the crucial 27th wave.

He had already made the determination to go all out in order to give his latest and arguably his most magnificent creation a chance to survive this powerful tribulation.

Ves briefly interrupted his work and reached out to the Unending Regalia that he had temporarily put aside.

At the same time, he urged his living mech to form a more effective solution for the next wave of lightning attacks.

"Major, you need to direct the Elemental Lord to produce a more effective means to wipe out the lightning bird."

"We are trying, but we have reached the limit of what the fire fey and the wood fey can do." The mech pilot helplessly said. "They have done their utmost to harness as much fire and wood energy as possible. Unless they attain some sort of breakthrough, it is not realistic for them to produce a stronger result in the short term."

Ves briefly withdrew a small item from his armor.

"This is not their limit. Their potential is far greater than this. If two elements are not enough, then make use of three elements. The second brother is doing little aside from putting up an energy shield at times. The water fey can do more. Water begets wood. Wood begets fire."

Major Jankowski's expression hardened. "It is already tough for the five brothers to blend two different elements at the same time. If they start to work in a third one, the difficulty of maintaining control will become much higher."

"We have no choice! The five brothers have to start with this sooner than later. If they want to make it all the way to the 81th lightning strike, then they cannot survive without harnessing all 5 elements at the same time! How can they grow so far if they do not have the courage and the will to tame three elements?!"

The RA mech officer did not reply any further, but the mech under his control and supervision already started to take action.

The water fey which had previously remained passive suddenly began to take a more active role. Water energy began to surge from the surroundings. There was plenty of moisture and bodies of water in the artificial wilderness of New Constantinople VIII.

Water was the liquid of life. Water was the primary component of the blood that sustained living organisms. Water contained the atoms that enabled stars to burn so long that they could easily maintain their brightness for billions of years!

As the second brother attempted to work with his fourth and fifth sibling, their cooperation initially started off shaky.

The purple phoenix suddenly acted as if a large pool of water had almost doused its flames.

The water E energy was colliding directly against the fire E energy, producing many different conflicts that significantly reduced the combat effectiveness of the Elemental Lord!

Major Jankowski gritted his teeth yet again as he tried his best to help the three brothers combine their elements without producing too many undesirable collisions.

It was too difficult!

Combining two elements was manageable because there was only one relationship to worry about.

Putting three elements in closer proximity to each other produced a triangle of relationships, meaning that the Elemental Lord had to exert three times as much control to keep everything together!

Although the water fey was able to share the growing burden, it was not enough to manage all of the added volatility.

Just as the storm clouds from above began to spit out a massive quantity of angry lightning birds, Major Jankowski suddenly felt through the man-machine connection that the Elemental Lord had gained a sudden surge of strength!

Not only that, but the mech officer felt that the five brothers were all undergoing a strange transformation that caused them to grow more sharper and more dignified.

Their control over the elements improved by a significant margin as the drone mech and the living fey gained an inexplicable sense of pride and confidence that significantly increased their ability to tame the elements!

The water E energy had already begun to clash a lot less with the fire E energy, thereby allowing the fire phoenix to regain its initial stability!

Major Jankowski could not explain what had happened. He instinctively felt that the mech designer riding along was responsible for this sudden change.

When the mech officer briefly turned his head, he saw that Professor Ves had actually unscrewed a few panels and conducted extensive modifications with the tools he had at hand!

"Professor, what have you done?!"

"It's too complicated for me to explain. Just know that I have given the Elemental Lord a boost that should hopefully make a difference."

"What you have done is working. The five brothers have all changed for the better. Their control over the elements has grown to the point where they are actually doing a good job at controlling three elements at the same time!"

Major Jankowski still did not know how a bit of tinkering could cause the Elemental Lord to gain such drastic improvement.

Only Ves understood exactly what he had done to improve his living mech's chances to survive the next few waves.

Did he make the right decision?

He was not sure about that. He chose to act on feelings, so he did not restrain himself when he secretly applied one of Lucky's gems to the Elemental Lord.

Ves briefly recalled the description of the gem that attracted him the most. Somehow, this one seemed more fitting than the rest.

[VIEAK FRAGMENT]

A semi-processed gem that contains the royal conceit of a second-born prince that has lost the struggle for the throne. Imparts an aggressive form of regality that will always be inadequate compared to authentic royal authority. Any discussion or behavior that hints or accuses the mech or its user of being a pretender, illegitimate, a spare or second-best will invoke violent retaliation.

Chapter 5424 Growth of the Elemental Lords

Chirp! Chirp! Chirp! Chirp! Chirp! Chirp! Chirp! Chirp! Chirp! Chirp! Chirp!

The quantity of lightning birds that comprised the 26th wave was already overwhelming!

Energy beams and gauss rounds sought to whittle down their numbers, but these inefficient attacks did not make any significant changes to the threat posed by the attack wave.

Thousands of lightning birds descended upon the fleeing Elemental Lord without mercy!

"Yet just as the momentous and oppressive swarm of birds managed to get close enough, a much larger and more violent phoenix crashed into their midst and began to disperse hundreds of tribulation manifestations with sweeping flames!

"Burn them all! Let your phoenix sweep these birds!"

A lot of observers were surprised by how much stronger the purple phoenix had become.

Though the strengthened energy construct had not grown strong enough to crush this attack wave entirely, it had abruptly grown large and powerful enough to reduce the formidable threat posed by the 26th strike to a manageable level!

The remaining lightning birds that managed to get past this powerful phoenix struck the prepared drone mech and the accompanying fey with slightly greater violence than before, but somehow inflicted less damage per attack.

The metallic reinforcement of the mech frame had grown stronger!

The first brother managed to capture and utilize a greater quantity of metal E energy than before. With all of this extra strength, the internals of the mech had received a crucial boost in strength, enabling the components to weather this tide a lot better than last time!

What was remarkable was that the Elemental Lord maintained a domineering appearance throughout this painful moment.

The mech's aura and demeanor had changed significantly just a short moment ago. It previously gave off the impression as if it was a machine that was constantly on the verge of losing control.

Now, the Elemental Lord had abruptly begun to live up to its name by exerting a lot more control over the elemental energies in the environment.

Its ability to control the forces of nature had improved in a way that made it seem as if the living mech commanded the elements as if there was no reason for the latter to disobey!

The differences were massive.

Not only had the main body and the four fey gained stronger individual control over their elements, but they had found that it became much easier for them to combine their elements together!

Although their ability to merge three elements at the same time was still a distance away from perfection, their chances of producing backlashes had dropped to a massive extent!

All of this was because Ves had secretly embedded one of his gems onto his work.

To be honest, a part of him questioned whether he had picked the right one. There was another gem that also sounded suitable for the occasion.

[RETRIBUTION OF MAKOWOL THE LOST!

A semi-processed gem that contains the irreconcilable soul of a rebel leader who disappeared on the eve of victory. Will impart greater damage resistance from any attacks launched by figures of authority and their oppressed subjects.

Ves released a small sigh. He instinctively felt that this oddly-named gem would have been able to help the Elemental Lord resist the lightning tribulation in a more direct fashion.

However, Ves ultimately concluded that it was a lot more important to increase his powerful mech's mastery over the five elements.

He did not see any reason to regret his choice so far. Harnessing the power of three elements instead of two made such an immediate difference that his mech was in a much better shape than he initially expected!

"Be careful." Ves warned as he was shaking off the lingering shocks from his earlier lightning bath. "The end of the 3rd round is at hand. The 27th wave will stress our defenses like nothing else. Can the fire fey produce another phoenix?"

Major Jankowski shook his head. "I have already made this suggestion, it is not possible. The burden of control is too great."

That was bad news. The fire phoenix had become a lot stronger alright, but there were limits to how extensively a single construct could overcome an entire swarm of lightning birds!

"The only other measure we can take is to pull the fire phoenix closer." The mech officer said. "That will allow us to burn more lightning birds, but it will test the control of all five brothers a lot more."

"This is a matter of life and death for them. They need to take risks."

The two occupants fell silent when the last and most dreaded wave of lightning attacks had emerged from the dark and gloomy clouds.

Chirp! Chirp! Chirp! Chirp! Chirp! Chirp! Chirp! Chirp! Chirp! Chirp! Chirp! Chirp! Chirp! Chirp! Chirp! Chirp! Chirp!

Lightning bird upon lightning bird descended from above, each carrying a significantly greater charge than before!

The quantity of birds that descended from above had grown so much that they briefly outshone the dark storm that had spawned them in the first place!

As the lightning birds began to dive and converge upon the Elemental Lord that had begun to move again, they showed remarkably greater intelligence and coordination than before.

"Damnit, they are no longer stupidly trying to chase after our mech in the straightest possible trajectory anymore."

The birds had actively split up into multiple pincers in an attempt to attack the Elemental Lord from opposing angles!

Energy beams and gauss rounds constantly sought to whittle down the great swarm, but its momentum had not dropped in the slightest.

Ves began to have a very bad feeling about this wave of lightning attacks. He made a few quick changes to the settings of his lightning rods to reduce their exposure to external lightning discharges.

He briefly thought for a moment before he made another decision.

He had been testing the boundaries of the lightning tribulation for a while now. Ancient wisdom claimed that any attempts to help the subject survive would provoke a heavier punishment, but so far that did not appear to be the case.

Either the lightning tribulation was not as discerning as he feared, or a creator was allowed to take a few liberties in helping his own work pass this crucial test.

Whatever the case, Ves gained enough courage to intervene in a more direct manner!

"Blinky."

"Mrow!"

His companion spirit emerged from his head and phased through the mech frame before entering the nearby fire fey!

Naturally, the fourth brother did not resist the arrival of the companion spirit of his progenitor.

The fire fey gained a bit more strength once Blinky started to discharge a part of the fire energies that he had accumulated in his Blinkyverse!

"Mrow!"

The fire phoenix grew even larger and gained a more commanding aura, yet whether this made any substantial difference remained to be seen.

"They're coming!"

When the flood of lightning birds had begun to come close enough to make their attack runs, the fire phoenix could only attack two of the four pincers that were descending onto the Elemental Lord at most.

As the fire phoenix stuck close to the living mech and flew back and forth, it managed to capture most of the lightning birds that approached from two different angles!

However, that left the other two pincers of lightning birds free to collide against the vulnerable mech and the fey.

Yet just before these unattended lightning birds completed their mission, the temperature in the immediate area rapidly rose!

"BURN THEM ALL!"

The fire phoenix had turned around its majestic head and unleashed a spray of purple flame that not only washed over the Elemental Lord, but also struck many of the lightning birds that were on the cusp of transferring their damaging charge to the mech frame!

By the time the most intimidating wave of lightning birds had come to an end, the Elemental Lord emerged from this incident with a scorched but still relatively intact appearance!

"We did it!" Ves jubilantly cheered inside the cockpit. "Although that last move has caused our mech's exterior to sustain a bit of damage, the internals are still in a good enough shape to proceed. We have successfully managed to complete a third of this lightning tribulation."

"Meow meow!"

Even Lucky felt happy that they managed to resist the huge amount of lightning birds with only a small proportion of them getting through. The gem cat previously thought there was no way they would even last long enough to witness the 27th wave.

However, Ves and Major Jankowski suddenly lost their joy as the thunderstorm above began to release more crackling sounds.

It was as if the tribulation had grown furious at the fact that its target had managed to survive for so long!

"The fourth round of strikes is about to begin." Ves spoke. "Be prepared for anything."

As a part of the clouds glowed brighter and brighter, a large ball of golden lightning eventually descended from the skies!

This lightning ball was much larger, faster and more intimidating than the previous swarms of lightning birds!

"Damn!"

While Ves was happy that this powerful lightning ball did not strike the Elemental Lord all at once in a single instant lightning bolt, that did not change the fact that it would probably fry the drone mech from within if it got too close!

The luminar crystal rifle along with the two offensive fey immediately began to pepper the lightning ball with ranged attacks.

This time, the energy beams and gauss rounds produced significantly greater results than before.

Unlike the thousands of lightning birds of before, the opposition consisted of a single target this time.

However, Ves noticed that the repeated ranged attacks were not having that much of an effect. They were only being empowered by three separate elements, which meant that they did not gain any additional power derived from synergy.

By the time the large lightning ball had come very close, it had hardly diminished in size due to the low threat posed by the Elemental Lord.

Fortunately, the living mech still had a fire phoenix under control. The second, fourth and fifth brothers had made good use of the available time to strengthen their cooperation.

"Release the fire breath!"

Just as the fire phoenix was about to bathe the large lightning ball into a torrent of flames, the latter suddenly crackled and changed in form!

Within a short amount of time, the giant lightning ball turned into a strange bipedal alien that belonged to a species that Ves and Major Jankowski did not recognize!

The powerful alien form manifested by the golden lightning ball was relatively short, stocky and was covered by scales.

Its three compound eyes radiated pure menace while its two sets of arms made it look even more inhuman!

The smaller and weaker pair of arms lacked a lot of muscle mass and only appeared to be good for fine manipulation.

That was not the case for the larger and much more bulky set of arms. It not only looked strong enough to crush a human skull, but also happened to wield a broad and thick blade of golden lightning.

Supported by a pair of digitigrade that was standing in the air, the massive alien made out of tribulation energy looked like the personification of a completely unfamiliar alien warrior race!

Ves had a feeling that the lightning tribulation had produced a powerful sentient life form that was native to Messier 87!

What happened next surprised everyone.

When the fire breath unleashed by the purple phoenix was on the verge of engulfing its target, the four-armed alien manifestation swung its sword in a single powerful movement!

The tribulation manifestation released a wave of lightning energy that not only overpowered the flames, but also struck a deadly blow against the fire phoenix!

"What?!"

"Meeow!"

The water, fire and wood fey momentarily lost control as the powerful lightning strike had completely disrupted their control over their own energies!

While the affected fey hurriedly tried to recover and condense another phoenix, the large tribulation manifestation had already begun to lift its lightning sword in preparation to unleash a second lightning strike.

"Don't let it pull off that move again!" Ves urgently warned Major Jankowski.

Chapter 5425 The Lightning Warrior

A lot of observers became shocked and surprised when they witnessed how the lightning tribulation had progressed.

A few of the more knowledgeable figures became impressed by how long the newly fabricated mech had managed to hold out against the forces that sought to erase its existence.

Among their exceedingly small circle, it was common wisdom that anything that could trigger a response from above was bound to possess special properties. They were never truly weak, or else they would have never ended up in this predicament in the first place.

However, against a storm of this magnitude and severity, it was hard to imagine that a second-class mech of this configuration could last more than several lightning strikes.

The fact that it had managed to overcome 27 continuous 'strikes' with very little interruption in between caused a lot of people to pay much greater attention to the mech and its original designer!

It had not been particularly difficult to obtain the design files or even the entire development logs of the so-called Fey Project.

Obtaining recordings of the spontaneous but remarkable redesign was harder, but not impossible.

Every mech designer who had access to all of this information formed their own conclusions about the odd drone mech.

It was clear that its maker had reached an exceptional state of mind in order for him to develop such an impressive mech in a short amount of time.

It generated a lot of questions on how much ancient knowledge Professor Ves Larkinson secretly mastered.

No matter what, a mech like this could never be developed from thin air!

The esoteric knowledge that formed the foundation of the multi-elemental mech was controversial, to say the least.

The five elements left a bad taste in the mouth of many leading human figures.

Only those who had lived during those times or became initiated in the secrets of the past would know how much of a taboo it was to toy with the five elements!

This was what made Ves Larkinson's disposition so perplexing. More than a few people speculated whether he was a modern representative of the Five Scrolls Compact.

Though those suspicions never led to anything further, it was clear that this young mech designer was one of the few humans who successfully straddled the line between old traditions and modern technology.

No matter how much controversy he generated, so long as his contributions to the mech community and human society were valuable enough, there was no need to pay any further attention to his eccentricities!

Even if those outlandish accusations that he was secretly advancing the interests of that forbidden cult, so what?

The Great Severing had put a clean break between the ghosts of the past and the problems of the present!

Red humanity needed to confront much more acute threats that posed an existential danger to everyone, not just the supporters and detractors of different human factions!

Messier 87 had always been the central focus of the leaders who got transported along with the rest of the human population of the Red Ocean.

As the unexpected lightning tribulation actually managed to progress far enough to manifest a member of one of the powerful alien races that was definitely native to that supermassive galaxy, interest in this remarkable event had spiked!

The ability for red humanity to glean information from a galaxy that was located hundreds of thousands of light-years away was exceedingly limited!

Any early intelligence that could provide concrete details on the powerful native aliens could save billions if not trillions of precious human lives in the decades to come.

These hidden observers all shared the same hope at the moment.

"Do not fail too soon."

Meanwhile, right underneath the surging storm clouds, the Elemental Lord became confronted by an entirely new threat.

The nature of the 28th wave was completely different from the 27th one!

Ves was still reeling from all of the changes and rapidly tried to figure out what was happening based on his observations and the data at his disposal.

After Jovy told him that this lightning tribulation was of a multi-modal variety, Ves quickly started to understand what sort of gauntlet his mech had got caught up in after its completion.

Every change in operation signified a brand new challenge. The previous 9 waves all tested the Elemental Lord's ability to defeat large quantities of small threats.

Now that the lightning tribulation had produced a single big threat, it was not difficult to guess that the 4th round was supposed to test the Elemental Lord's ability to resist strong individual champions!

Right now, Ves and Blinky keenly noticed that this four-armed alien 'swordsmen' was somehow drawing in a lot of E energy as it lifted up its sword.

The lightning manifestation had done this before, and the resulting lightning bolt utterly managed to crush the powerful fire phoenix!

Ves already calculated that the Elemental Lord would sustain permanent damage if it got struck directly by a bolt of that magnitude.

Against a threat that roughly resembled a swordsman mech with limited ranged attack capabilities, Major Simon Jankowski fell back on his extensive training and experience.

He chose to pull back his Elemental Lord. It was highly likely that this alien swordsman was even deadlier at close range, and Jankowski did not want to risk getting zapped by the lightning manifestation's entire charge if his living mech made direct contact.

Jankowski made the most logical choice. Not only was his drone mech increasing its distance from the giant alien swordsman, but it had never let up its ranged attacks!

Powerful hyper laser beams, purple fire beams and earth gauss rounds continually struck the lightning manifestation that oddly matched the height of the Elemental Lord, but these powerful attacks only inflicted fleeting damage to the concentrated mass of tribulation lightning.

"Our ranged attacks are not effective!" Ves warned. "We need to inflict more area damage against a target that does not appear to have a solid physical body. The five brothers need to work together and combine several elements in order to produce more effective attacks."

"We know." Jankowski replied. "We are still working on it, professor. It takes time to figure this out from scratch."

"I do not think we have enough time. INCOMING!"

The mech officer and the Elemental Lord had been paying close attention to the lightning construct.

Though it did not appear to be truly alive, its slightly mechanical movements nonetheless betrayed that this lightning manifestation was based on a real alien!

After gathering a sufficient quantity of E energy around its lightning sword, the giant alien figure performed a fast overhead sword strike that launched a powerful bolt of lightning that rapidly reached out towards its target!

Major Jankowski precisely forced his mech to boost to the side in an attempt to throw off his opponent's aim and evade the powerful strike.

However, the arcing lightning bolt unerringly homed in on the Elemental Lord, thereby negating the attempt to evade its fury!

BOOOOM!

The entire cockpit rattled as the Elemental Lord's azure energy shield absorbed the brunt of this powerful lightning strike!

Despite getting boosted by the water E energy supplied by the second brother, the azure energy shield immediately overloaded, causing its generator to spark and fail in an instant!

"Our azure energy shield is down!"

All five brothers had become distressed at how close the drone mech had been to incurring significant electrical damage.

Ves and Jankowski had also grown shocked at what had happened.

The Elemental Lord was not able to cope with this kind of attack!

Given that the lightning tribulation had already advanced to the 28th wave, it was already a given that its power was bound to be much greater than the 18th lightning strike.

However, Ves did not expect that a casual attack from a giant lightning manifestation would be able to launch repeated lightning bolts of this magnitude.

"We cannot go on like this!" Ves quickly concluded. "The base capabilities of the Elemental Lord are completely inadequate in the face of this power. The mech does not have the mobility or the defenses to withstand these attacks. You need to finish off this lightning manifestation quickly or find a way to stop it from swinging its lightning sword like that again."

The second, fourth and fifth brothers were already trying to form an effective response.

They had been trying to gather enough fire, wood and water E energies to launch a powerful long-ranged fire attack that could engulf the lightning manifestation.

However, the last attack not only broke their concentration, but also destroyed much of the multi-elemental E energy construct that they had been attempting to form!

The giant lightning swordsman only paid a relatively minor cost to launch this attack, which meant that it could still launch a lot more lightning bolts before it expended its own charge.

As the alien swordsman slowly began to lift up its lightning sword in order to accumulate more E energies, Major Jankowski eventually decided to switch up his strategy.

The Elemental Lord no longer tried to maintain its distance, but instead did the opposite and charge straight towards the giant lightning manifestation!

"What are you doing?!"

"I feel it is a mistake to fight this lightning alien from afar." Major Jankowski rapidly explained. "The earlier lightning ball took on the form of a swordsman. I think that it has taken this shape because it is designed to test our ability to fight up close. I can sense the challenge in its eyes."

"Those are alien compound eyes! Who knows what sort of meaning they convey!"

"I am a soldier. Alien or not, this swordsman made out of lightning clearly wants us to test our blade!"

"We'll just get shocked from the moment your weapon makes contact with this concentrated collection of lightning energy!"

Major Jankowski was making a huge gamble here. Ves understood the mech officer's logic, but he still thought that it was best to counter this lightning manifestation by launching overwhelmingly powerful ranged attacks.

The pilot was in charge, though. He acted on his new plan and immediately put away the Elemental Lord's luminal crystal rifle so that it could draw a transphasic hyper sword that had already been infused with concentrated metal energies!

The fey had become an afterthought at this time. The situation in the field changed so quickly that they were unable to keep up with all of the developments.

Fortunately, the earth fey and the fire fey kept up their ranged attacks, though they only inflicted light damage onto the lightning manifestation.

As soon as the Elemental Lord closed the distance, Ves braced himself in case a direct contact caused the entire mech frame to be shocked!

Clang!

"What?!"

Much to Ves' surprise, the lightning sword did not behave according to his expectations!

When the lightning alien aborted its previous move so that it could use its crackling weapon to block the Elemental Lord's attack, its sword actually functioned like a physical weapon!

Though the drone mech incurred light shocks at the moment the two swords collided against each other, they were still a lot weaker than Ves initially anticipated!

He realized that Major Jankowski may be right. Perhaps it was still possible for the Elemental Lord to defeat the lightning manifestation at range, but it was apparently not the most optimal way to resolve this kind of tribulation.

Major Jankowski grinned. His opponent became a lot more familiar all of a sudden.

The alien swordsman no longer attempted to launch any powerful ranged attacks, but started to fight in a manner that was highly reminiscent of mechs armed with swords!

As a seasoned mech officer of the Red Association, Major Jankowski's swordsmanship was excellent even if he did not specialize in melee combat.

He did not go on the offensive right away, but instead sought to fight in a conservative manner so that he could gain a better measure of his current adversary.

The swordsmanship demonstrated by the four-armed alien was both familiar and different.

Many of the basic movements and techniques were universal among all bipedal species.

However, it was the way in which the alien swordsman actively stirred up the E energies around him that gave its attacks a greater edge.

Ves immediately formed a conclusion after he had observed this simulated alien warrior for a time.

"I think we are fighting against a qi cultivator!"

"A what?"

Chapter 5426 Elemental Power

The swordsmanship of the alien lightning warrior was good.

Ves did not understand swordsmanship as well as Ketis or even his second daughter, but he had witnessed enough excellent swordsman mechs in action to know that the four-armed alien was both skilled and dedicated in this discipline.

It was not even all that alien to be honest. There were only so many ways that a humanoid arm could swing a sharp and fairly long bladed weapon.

Despite the weird set of eyes and the inhuman pair of digitigrade legs, the four-armed swordsman made out of tribulation lightning fought in a surprisingly familiar fashion if Ves focused on its swordsmanship alone.

If that was the extent of the lightning warrior's combat capabilities, then Major Jankowski should readily be able to defeat his opponent!

After all, outside of high-ranking mech pilots such as Venerable Dise and General Ark Larkinson, the first-class mech pilots of the Red Association received the best overall training and enjoyed the most high-tech augmentations and facilities.

Though Major Jankowski's fighting routine was disturbingly standard and devoid of the extremes that characterized traditional swordsmanship styles, he did not fight in an overly rigid or mechanical way.

He adjusted his sword techniques based on the properties of his current mech frame as well as his personal preferences.

Right now, Major Jankowski fought like an instructor that sought to suppress his more inexperienced sparring partner rather than for the killing blow right away.

It was rather clever of him to hold back as soon as he recognized that the lightning warrior was not as difficult or dangerous to deal with when confronted at close range.

The most important priority at the moment was to delay the next wave of attacks and to learn as much information as possible!

If they finished off this relatively weak lightning warrior right away, the Elemental Lord would not have enough intelligence or buffer time to put up a good fight against a more powerful lightning manifestation!

Right now, Ves and Major Jankowski became most fascinated by the 'physical' properties of their current adversary.

While the sword-wielding mech did not do its best to land any deadly blows against its opponents, the transphasic hyper sword struck the 'body' of the lightning warrior on occasion.

Despite the lightning manifestation's appearance, whenever it got struck by a sword attack, it did not respond with a violent or overwhelming discharge of tribulation lightning!

Instead, it only produced a moderate shock that the main body of the Elemental Lord could reluctantly tolerate.

Ves even grabbed hold of his improvised lightning rods so that he could resume the strengthening of his body.

"This alien lightning swordsman behaved somewhat similar to a physical body." Major Jankowski noted. "Every hit with a sword is met with physical feedback. It is not quite the same as hitting metal armor or organic flesh, but the resistance is close enough that it doesn't matter."

Ves made another important observation. "The shock feedback is growing over time. Compared to the initial shock when your sword first struck the lightning warrior, your last hit incurred a response that is 30 percent more powerful. Although the lightning warrior is losing its charge at a faster rate, the more you stall this duel, the more threat it poses over time."

This was bad news for them because they would only have a limited amount of time to figure out the rules and prepare for the following waves!

"I do not feel that my current opponent is a thinking or living alien being, but it is simulating an intelligent being close enough to adapt to my fighting style." Jankowski spoke. "It is becoming harder and harder to pull off the same feints. However, the skill level of this alien swordsman is too low to gain the upper hand."

That sounded a bit odd, but not completely out of expectation. It was yet another form of pressure against the target of this tribulation storm.

"How are you coping against its elemental attacks?"

"They're annoying, but my mech has been able to use the same defensive measures as last time to mitigate the damage."

The lightning warrior did not fight like a simple swordsman.

Even though its sword techniques were relatively basic, they actively sucked in the surrounding E energies and converted them into more powerful lightning attacks!

The lightning warrior was able to form lightning waves, lightning shields and lightning spears that occasionally caught Major Jankowski off-guard.

If not for the fact that the Elemental Lord was able to mitigate these strange elemental moves by boosting its defenses with metal and earth E energies, the mech frame would have sustained much more severe damage!

Both Ves and Major Jankowski grew more concerned about the lightning warriors that would show up in subsequent waves.

Whether the lightning tribulation would produce another four-armed swordsman or a completely different alien warrior, the ones that emerged in the later waves were bound to be a lot more challenging to defend against!

"Ah!"

"Meow!"

The regular contact between the Elemental Lord and the lightning swordsman provided the former with a regular and relatively controlled infusion of tribulation lightning, but that would not last long.

The gradual increase in shock feedback was already starting to approach dangerous levels!

This was even after the first brother and the third brother worked together to promote the defenses of the mech frame!

With the power of metal and earth turning the main body into a surprisingly resilient combat platform, it had been able to bear shock after shock without anything important getting fried!

"Unless the Elemental Lord can strengthen its defenses further, we need to wrap up this duel." Ves spoke. "Try and see if you can cripple the lightning warrior's limbs and organs."

The sword-wielding drone mech no longer held back as much and began to convey a lot more aggression!

Major Jankowski began to exert much more of his skill as a first-class mech pilot. The machine under his control expertly side-stepped the lightning warrior's slash and utilized its metal and earth-infused sword to amputate one of the four arms!

"It works!"

The lightning warrior simulated a pain response and reeled away as it lost its other greater arm!

The crippling injury continued to debilitate the lightning warrior, making it easier for Major Jankowski to dominate the fight and cut off other body parts.

"Cutting off the legs does not do anything aside from giving it more pain." Jankowski frowned. "The lightning manifestation does not need to support itself on the ground, so its legs are completely redundant."

By the time the lightning warrior had lost all 6 of its alien limbs, it had lost a lot of charge, causing it to exude a lot less pressure than at the beginning.

An alarm suddenly sounded in the cockpit!

"The emissions of the lightning warrior are soaring! It is going to blow!"

Major Jankowski had already pulled back his Elemental Lord as soon as he sensed a dangerous reaction from his much-reduced opponent.

CRACKLE!

The drone mech and all of the fey had managed to retreat quickly enough to avoid much of the power of the electrical explosion!

The 28th wave had been solved!

"8 more waves to go." Ves remarked with a frown. "I am not sure how the next ones will be stronger, but I think it is likely that the skill and the energy manipulation of the subsequent lightning manifestations will become progressively stronger. You cannot rely on your swordsmanship alone. You need to make the most out of the advantages of the Elemental Lord. Its name is not a decoration."

The RA mech officer nodded in understanding.

Crackle! Crackle! Crackle!

After a short delay, the 29th wave had finally begun.

Ves let out a breath in relief when he saw that the storm clouds had produced another four-armed lightning warrior.

This particular manifestation looked almost identical from the last one, though it was slightly larger and possessed a distinctly more battle-tested aura.

"I do not think we are dealing with an inexperienced swordsman anymore."

As the new lightning warrior descended from the skies, Major Jankowski did not want to take the risk and allow his new adversary to release a devastating ranged attack.

The Elemental Lord fearlessly charged forward! Its earlier victory enhanced its momentum. Its confident demeanor also became a bit more prominent as the five brothers had made good use of the previous delay to sort out new and better ways to combine their elemental powers.

The defenses of the Elemental Lord grew substantially more powerful than before as the first brother, the third brother and the fourth brother teamed up to combine three elements at once!

For whatever reason, fire promoted earth, though Ves had little understanding of the logic behind such a relationship.

Nonetheless, it provided a crucial link that allowed the earth fey to feed substantially more earth E energy into the main body, thereby strengthening its metallic defenses to a higher level!

Though Ves was vaguely aware that metal was supposed to be weak against the lightning element, there was no time to figure out a more sophisticated way to strengthen the main body's ability to resist damage.

Any reinforcement was better than nothing!

When the Elemental Lord was about to launch a sweeping sword strike designed to cripple one of the four-armed alien's limbs right away, the new lightning warrior did not stupidly stand around.

Instead, the alien bent down and leapt forward by making use of invisible footing!

As the three-eyed alien thrust out with the tip of its sword, two different elements sparked from the extending blade, producing a crackling and fiery mix of energies that mixed so explosively with each other that it conveyed an acute threat towards the Elemental Lord!

"Evade!"

CRACKLE-BOOOM!

A spear of thunderfire extended straight from the length of the blade and extended forward by more than 150 meters!

Though the continuous discharge of fiery electrical explosions ultimately did nothing but hit empty air, the Elemental Lord had come close to getting struck by an attack that might have been strong enough to overwhelm its reinforced defenses!

"Damnit, this second lightning warrior is much more threatening than the first one!"

If this second lightning warrior was similar to the first one, then the Elemental Lord could not give its adversary enough room to perform any big moves!

Major Jankowski developed a lot more fear and respect towards his current opponent, but that did not stop him from urging the Elemental Lord to move close and lock blades with the thunderfire swordsman!

"MEOOOW!"

"AHHH! That's hot!"

When the Elemental Lord's sword made contact with the opposing weapon, a combination of tribulation lighting as well as tribulation fire somehow channeled into the mech!

Ves was surprised that the tribulation no longer stuck to a single element this time!

This did not bode well for the subsequent waves as the lightning tribulation could pressure the Elemental Lord in much more diverse ways.

One of the negative consequences to getting exposed to different elements was that they introduced brand new ways to damage his new mech.

Ves quickly studied the condition of the main body and noticed that it had not only incurred minor heat damage, but also came a little closer to reaching its maximum heat capacity.

If the Elemental Lord was unable to counteract this heat buildup, then its internals would get cooked sooner or later!

"The second brother has to figure out a way to counteract the tribulation fire and reduce the heat level of the mech frame." Ves advised.

"He is already working on it, but these fire energies are too strong, especially if they are mixed up with powerful lightning energies."

"We can either find a way to simultaneously deal with both, or you should take down this opponent as soon as possible."

It was better in the long run if the five brothers were able to combine their elements in a way that reduced the threat of thunderfire, but the hostile manifestation was not as easy to contain as before!

"I hate to say it, sir, but this thunderfire warrior is much more skilled with his blade! I have yet to land a single damaging blow onto his body."

Major Jankowski's skill with the sword had already been stretched to the limit, and this was just the second lightning manifestation to descend from the skies!

Chapter 5427 The 30th Wave

The jump in skill between the first lightning manifestation and the second one was too big!

The first lightning manifestation was pretty much the alien equivalent of a rookie. Even if it possessed a huge charge of tribulation lightning, its overall lack of skill and strength made it easy for Major Jankowski to dismantle his opponent up close.

The new thunderfire manifestation was a different story altogether. The swordsmanship and more importantly the elemental fighting techniques were on a much higher level, making it so that Major Jankowski and his living mech had to fight much more seriously from the onset!

The fact that the Elemental Lord was unable to finish off the thunderfire warrior right away did not make Ves more optimistic about the future waves!

Fortunately, there was still hope of beating this opponent.

The Elemental Lord was not a swordsman mech. Much of its combat power rested in its living fey, which were contributing to the fight in many ways.

The fire fey and the earth fey were constantly hammering the thunderfire manifestation with ranged attacks.

Different from before, their output no longer aimed at the center mass but focused on targeting the limbs of the tribulation manifestation instead!

The fast and skilled movements of the thunderfire swordsman caused a lot of these attempts to miss, but the few hits were able to produce greater results than before.

In addition to that, the five brothers were considerably faster and more proficient in harnessing and combining their energies to produce different effects.

Ever since Ves had merged one of Lucky's gems with the mech, the five brothers were not only able to merge three elements in more varied ways, but also became more skilled at multitasking.

For example, the fire fey not only worked toward reinforcing the defenses of the main body by taking part in a fire-earth-metal chain, but also enhanced the firepower of the luminar crystal cannon by forming a water-wood-fire chain!

The burden on the fourth brother had increased dramatically as a result, but the living fey had grown so much during this fight that he was truly beginning to live up to his potential! "No tribulation will cut off my path to life. I will burn everything that attempts to do so, even if I have to ignite those storm clouds myself!"

The fighting intent of the five brothers grew with each passing second as they constantly improved their ability to wield the elemental E energies that they were meant to control. However, Ves was not as optimistic as his living mech.

His mind was not focused on the present, but rather on the future.

If the threat level of the tribulation warriors continued to grow at this pace, then the next ones were bound to inflict serious damage onto the Elemental Lord!

This was no time for the living mech to feel comfortable. The five brothers needed to make the next step and begin to combine four elements at the same time!

However, that was not the only way to increase their power.

Ves had always kept an eye on the thunderfire warrior. Compared to its more proficient swordplay, he was much more interested in how this four-armed alien manifestation used the elements to its advantage.

For whatever reason, the thunderfire swordsman was able to draw in lightning and fire energy and mix them up in a highly combustible combination that produced much more damaging explosions than if these two elements operated separately.

One of the keys of this combination was that the two elements had been merged in such a profound way that they maximized the power that could be generated from the absorbed E energies!

This was one of the reasons why the thunderfire warrior was not losing its charge that quickly despite launching all manner of thunderfire-augmented attacks.

The earth fey suffered another fiery shock as its sword failed to block a quick jab after it had made a mistake and overextended itself.

Before the sword strike could strike the main body of the Elemental Lord, the earth fey quickly moved in the way and resisted the strike with its thick and sturdy construction! CRACKLE-BOOM!

The earth fey launched away with cracked armor plating and a few damaged components, but it had bought enough time for the main body to recover and launch a quick counterattack that severed the sword arm of the thunderfire warrior!

"Good job!"

Of course, the thunderfire swordsman instantly compensated by transferring its sword to its other greater arm.

Unlike the first tribulation warrior, the second one possessed a much stronger mentality. Not only was the latter able to cope with its crippling wound a lot better, but it was almost just as skilled with fighting with its off-hand!

Fortunately for Major Jankowski, his opponent lost just enough combat effectiveness for him to gradually gain the upper hand in this duel.

Hostile lightning and fire energies regularly entered the main body and the fey as they intermittently got struck one way or another.

Each strike produced a fair amount of explosive damage to their chassis and internals, but much of the damage partially restored for mystical reasons.

The same went for Ves and Lucky. They experienced a fraction of the tribulation forces that sought to crush the Elemental Lord entirely, and grew in ways that could not be fully described.

As Ves experienced the power of thunderfire first-hand, he developed a much more comprehensive understanding of this compound element.

According to a few sources of cultivation science that he had read in the past, lightning was sometimes treated as a separate element, and other times treated as a derivative of the air element.

Different ages and different schools of thought all came up with different interpretations of the lightning element, which caused them to work with it in vastly different ways.

What mattered was that it was a lot harder to work with than one of the classical elements. The chance of suffering self-harm was much greater, so Ves could not imagine how much pain these four-armed alien swordsmen went through in order to master the power of lightning.

However, the reward was great as the lightning element was regarded as one of the most powerful offensive elements.

Combining this volatile element with another offensive element such as fire was incredibly hard as their interaction never led to any stable combination!

They only ever produced one form of explosive discharge or another. It took a lot of skill, effort, talent and most importantly persistence for a cultivator to master effective ways to combine these two elements!

What impressed Ves quite a bit was that the four-armed alien swordsmen did not fight like high-ranking mech pilots or traditional swordsmen.

Unlike willpower cultivators whose very intentions could forcibly rewrite the laws of reality within their domains, the two lightning manifestations fought as if they were in harmony with the environment!

This method of energy utilization reminded Ves a lot of his mother as well as his design spirits.

Though Ves found that to be rather odd as he had always associated swordsmen with willpower cultivation, it appeared that this four-armed alien race preferred to combine their swordsmanship with qi cultivation!

"It makes sense."

These presumed natives of Messier 87 operated in a high energy environment. The concentration of E energy radiation was so stupendously high that it would be stupid not to take advantage of all of the free and readily available resources!

Since the power of heaven was so ridiculously abundant in the supermassive galaxy, then the most dominant forms of combat likely revolved around who could leverage this power better than their adversaries.

Ves boldly speculated that willpower cultivation likely failed to gain any traction because it was too damn slow and difficult to progress. The demands were harsh and many of the advantages that made it so effective in the Milky Way weren't as relevant in a radically different environment.

If this lightning tribulation continued to generate different manifestations based on the native aliens or beasts of Messier 87, then they were bound to utilize different elements in profound and impressive ways!

CRACKLE-BOOM!

The Elemental Lord quickly retreated after it had finally managed to land a fatal blow on the thunderfire warrior.

The second manifestation promptly blew up now that it had been deemed too 'injured' to put up an effective fight.

Neither Ves nor Major Jankowski were particularly pleased by this outcome.

"Have the five brothers managed to learn how to combine four elements?" Ves asked in a tone that conveyed a lot of doubt.

The mech officer shook his head. "They have already tried to do this numerous times. No matter how carefully they work, they always lose control right away. The brothers have given up on this for the time being. They think that they can do a better job if they improve their control in other ways."

Ves did not know whether that was the right course of action to take.

Deepening their mastery of combining three elements was only effective in the short term.

Sooner or later, the tribulation would introduce a new challenge that could not be dealt with unless the Elemental Lord employed four elements at once!

"The 30th wave is coming."

The aura of oppression from the storm clouds had become a lot stronger. Both Ves and Major Jankowski changed their expressions as they became affected by the oppression radiated by the third manifestation.

Just like before, the giant warrior made out of tribulation lightning belonged to the same species as its predecessors.

Different from last time, the latest swordsman wielded a pair of shorter blades that did not look any less deadly.

Ves focused his senses on the new warrior.

"I can sense lightning and... wind! Not only that, but this third warrior has much stronger control over these elements. Its power application is on another level!"

"It is also fast!" Major Jankowski noted with alarm.

The Elemental Lord barely managed to raise its sword to block the wind swordsman's astonishingly fast attack run!

The cockpit violently jerked as the kinetic force of the collision forced the Elemental Lord back.

At the same time, the mech frame also became subjected to a considerably more powerful shock attack than before.

Major Jankowski was barely able to cope with this surprise attack before the wind warrior rapidly circled around and sought to stab its twin lightning blades at an undefended angle! Neither the main body nor any of the four fey could respond quickly enough to block this subsequent attack.

CRACKLE-CRACKLE-CRACKLE!

The Elemental Lord had no choice but to force its damaged azure energy shield generator to activate again.

The water-reinforced energy shield barely managed to come online before the powerful twin stabs and lightning discharges sundered it apart yet again!

This time, the azure shield generator suffered more severe damage, making it highly unlikely that the Elemental Lord could depend upon it for a third time.

Fortunately, azure energy shield delayed the wind warrior just enough for the Elemental Lord to turn around and block the next flurry of sword strikes.

Major Jankowski happened to possess a bit of proficiency in duel wielding. Under his direction, the main body pulled out a backup knife and used it to block the wind warrior's second sword.

Ves could clearly tell that the first-class mech pilot did not possess a lot of depth in this combat approach.

The wind warrior was so much faster and more skilled that Major Jankowski had no room to breathe!

He could do little aside from focusing on defense.

Not even the fey could offer any support this time. The attacks launched by the fire fey and the earth fey largely missed their mark.

The wind warrior also happened to excel at evasion!

The ridiculously fast and skilled wind-and-lightning manifestation briefly pressured the Elemental Lord with a continuous sword flurry, but suddenly pulled back before adopting a weird attack stance!

The power of wind surged behind the tribulation warrior. The energy levels were spiking at a rapid rate!

"EVADE!"

"MEOW!"

The cockpit violently jerked as the Elemental Lord uncontrollably spun to the side!

A significant chunk of armor plating as well as other components sprayed into the air as the explosively fast attack run of the wind warrior had torn out a part of the Elemental Lord's side!

Lightning coursed through the frame and compounded the physical damage. The mech had sustained heavy damage that undeniably compromised its performance!

The 30th wave was too strong!

Major Jankowski and the Elemental Lord were already starting to falter against this monstrously fast and powerful tribulation manifestation!

Chapter 5428 The Weakest Link

CRACKLE!

The cockpit of the Elemental Lord violently jerked yet again. The drone mech was reeling from the latest blow inflicted by the tribulation warrior that mastered the power of wind!

Major Jankowski's highly augmented brain was working at its very limit to keep up with the wind swordsman's blazingly fast moves, but the pressure exerted by this alien adversary was too great!

A lot of distant observers grew shocked by how quickly the difficulty of the lightning tribulation had escalated. The relatively smooth progress in the previous waves had given them the illusion that the subsequent ones would not ramp up so quickly, but the reality turned out to be different.

Only the ones with greater vision and knowledge knew that a lightning tribulation of this magnitude was much crueler in nature. It showed no mercy towards any subject that failed to meet its exceedingly high standards.

A comprehensive multi-modal lightning tribulation did not leave any room for weaknesses! Any shortcoming that negatively affected the performance of the subject would inevitably become exposed and lead to its downfall!

As Ves winced from the latest shock, he desperately tried to think of a way to overcome this predicament.

The fact that he hurriedly moved back to his Unending Regalia in order to take shelter in its protection was a clear sign that he had lost a lot of confidence in his work!

It couldn't be helped. As a mech designer who had lived through plenty of battles, his ability to read the battlefield was not trivial.

His ability to process data was already great, and it had improved even further after his continuous exposure to tribulation lightning substantially upgraded all of his capabilities.

He actually felt a lot more bloated than before. If not for the automatic space folding effect generated by his rapidly improved phase lord cultivation, he was afraid that his true body size would have surpassed the internal volume of this cockpit!

CRACKLE!

"Meow!"

"Ah!"

The Elemental Lord suffered another damaging impact!

It turned out that when the Elemental Lord successfully managed to block both sword strikes from the Wind Warrior, the latter actually lashed out with a powerful wind-infused kick!

Normally, a kick like this shouldn't have done more than to shove the Elemental Lord back, but the concentrated gathering of wind E energy sped it up to the point where it struck the mech's midsection with the force of a battering ram!

The armor plating covering the abdomen of the Elemental Lord had fractured!

This was despite its extensive physical and metaphysical reinforcement!

This move caused Ves' heart to chill even further. The four-armed alien produced by the lightning tribulation possessed too many advantages!

In terms of swordsmanship, the veteran first-class mech officer was clearly outmatched by the wind swordsman.

In terms of speed, a quasi first class standard mech like the Elemental Lord was far inferior to a qi cultivator that commanded the power of wind!

In terms of force, the momentum that the wind warrior could produce to empower its attacks did not make it weak at all. There was little the Elemental Lord could do to deliver any strong impacts.

The five brothers did not want to admit defeat, though. Their very lives were on the line, and they tried harder than ever to exert their growing abilities in effective ways.

"The speed differential is too great! We need to slow this swordsman down or increase our own speed. Fifth brother, are you making any progress in generating an energy field that can suppress or constrict the wind?"

The wood fey had been under a lot of pressure to find a way to constrain the movements of this powerful tribulation warrior.

"I can't! The wind swordsman's power and control over the forces of wind are too deep. The metal-water-wood chain doesn't seem to make a difference!"

"How can that be?! You are harnessing the power of three elements at the same time, while this tribulation warrior only truly leverages the wind element."

"Isn't it obvious? This wind swordsman's cultivation is much stronger and more focused. Just because it only specializes in one element doesn't necessarily mean it is weaker than our combinations."

The difference in accumulation was too great. The lightning tribulation clearly simulated the performance of a highly trained and experienced alien swordsman who was probably in his prime.

The Elemental Lord was technically a newborn in comparison! This matchup was not fair at all in that regard!

As the prospect of losing loomed over the mech, the atmosphere in the cockpit had grown more depressed.

If not for the fact that Major Jankowski was still doing his utmost to coordinate with the five brothers to keep up with the horrifying pace of the wind swordsman, he would have put a lot more thought into pulling the emergency ejection lever!

As Ves quickly managed to restore his armor, he went back to using his administrator access to tweak the settings of the mech and facilitate its damage control activities.

However, this was clearly not enough to turn the tide of this frantic duel and give his mech an opportunity to defeat its opponent.

Even stalling did not work! The fire fey and the earth fey had not ceased to fire their empowered hyper weapons at the wind warrior, but their target remained too elusive to hit.

Even if the two offensive fey managed to land a lucky blow, a wind shield swirled into existence that sapped much of the elements that reinforced the attack!

The defenses of the wind swordsman turned out to be formidable as well. As a qi cultivator who excelled in close quarter combat, this duel-wielding alien had developed a remarkably deep mastery in the application of wind E energy!

As Ves continued to analyze the data, he found it increasingly harder to optimize and improve the performance of the Elemental Lord.

It did not help that the mech incurred substantial damage every few seconds or so. The more the Elemental Lord suffered an attack, the more prone it became to getting hit again due to a reduction in performance!

There was nothing Ves could do to reverse this increasingly more dominant trend.

Ves briefly glanced in the direction of the cockpit.

Much of the reason why the Elemental Lord was losing out against this wind warrior was because his latest work suffered a glaring weakness.

The mech pilot was no longer able to keep up anymore. First-class mech pilot or not, Simon Jankowski was ultimately just a mortal human soldier. How could he possibly keep up with a transcendent alien swordsman who managed to prosper in a high-energy environment?

Major Jankowski had become the weakest link of the Elemental Lord.

Ves deeply regretted the fact that he had only completed the fabrication of altered Fey Project long after he had sent Saintess Ulrika Vraken away!

If she was in the cockpit, then she would have been able to outfight the wind warrior and win this bout by this time!

It did not even matter if the Elemental Lord was not an ace mech. An ace pilot had broken the human limit and could reach much greater heights!

Even if the Hexer ace pilot was not available, Ves could have asked a favor from the Devos Ancient Clan.

The Terrans would probably not object to lending out one of their own resident ace pilots.

Instead, Ves had been taken by surprise and had little choice but to borrow the best mech pilot of the Bluejay Fleet.

There was no use in crying over spilled milk. The harsh reality of the situation was that Ves had no choice but to work with the assets he had on hand.

Though Major Jankowski was far from able to match the extraordinary alien warriors of Messier 8? in his current state, Ves knew of at least one method to correct this shortcoming.

He briefly weighed the risks of employing this method.

It did not take long for him to make up his mind. Ves had already invested one of Lucky's precious gems to upgrade the performance of the Elemental Lord. There was no way he wanted to lose his investment!

"Lufa! Lend me your power!"

The angelic design spirit readily descended upon his progenitor.

Of course, Lufa did not bestow his glow to Ves in his guise as the Angel of Tranquility.

Instead, Lufa altered his presence with the power of revelation, thereby causing his aura to change into a variation that was better known as the transcendence glow!

Ves' demeanor had changed substantially after he had willingly become the conduit of Aspect of Transcendence.

Major Jankowski sensed the changes in the cockpit, but the mech officer was so focused on the fight that he did not consciously think about what was happening.

Nonetheless, the transcendence glow was already having an effect on his mind and spirit.

By promoting the obsessions, ambitions and focus of the subject to the extreme, this amazing glow was able to elevate the mood of any active mech pilot to the peak and beyond!

In order to produce the strongest possible effect, Ves not only embraced Lufa's descent, but also tried to merge himself with the design spirit, thereby causing the lines between the two to blur!

"Simon Jankowski." Ves spoke with a voice that had gained an ethereal reverberation. "You are 56 years old, yet you have made no notable accomplishments in your career. While you have managed to make accomplishments as a mech officer and reached the rank of major, is this where your true ambitions lie?"

The mech officer's eyes twitched, which signified that at least one part of him was paying attention to Ves' oddly hypnotic and compelling voice.

Ves added more heat in his words. "You are a failure of a mech pilot. Others may look up to you and think you are impressive for becoming a mech major in one of the strongest human

organizations, but as far as we are concerned, you are still a mortal who is bound by the constraints of reality. Your willpower is too weak and you have not managed to earn enough glory to make people remember your name after your passing. You are an insignificant existence!"

An air of judgment exuded from Ves as the transcendence glow fully exerted its influence on Major Jankowski!

"Many of your peers have managed to undergo their apotheosis in their twenties and thirties, thereby allowing them to step foot on the path to godhood. What about you? What you have managed to accomplish can be replicated by millions if not billions of other mech pilots in the Red Ocean and the Milky Way Galaxy? Nothing! You have earned no glory to speak of! Your prestige is entirely borrowed from the Red Association! Where is your pride? Where is your ambition? Are you truly content to live and die as a mortal?"

Though Major Jankowski was not able to free up enough of his focus to offer a response, his body language as well as his stimulated emotions made it clear that he was not reconciled with his mediocre life.

Every authentic mech pilot yearned to attain greatness!

Jankowski had suffered many setbacks in his decades of service. His failure in attaining any breakthroughs had crushed his youthful dreams and forced him to settle for less.

Now that he had come under the effect of the transcendence glow, he revisited these regrets and suddenly felt a lot less willing to bow down to reality!

Why should he allow others to become the hero when he was willing to work much harder to attain greater strength?

Why should he admit defeat when he still had many decades of time to develop his strength as a mech pilot?

Why must he embrace his own weakness and end up becoming the primary reason why the Elemental Lord was unable to overcome the 30th wave?

Simon refused to accept these outcomes!

He desired greater strength! This was the only way he could rewrite his own fate and avoid any further regrets!

As Major Jankowski's mental activity had begun to peak, Ves prepared to give the mech officer a final push.

He held the Hammer of Brilliance in his armored grip and raised it above Jankowski's head.

The hammerhead still exuded a bit of heat due to its prior exposure to the tribulation lightning.

"Every human has a chance to attain greatness. If you wish to shed your mortality, then this is the time! Accept our blessing and rise up to become our elemental champion!"

WHACK!

The flat side of the Hammer of Brilliance struck Major Jankowski's helmet!

Despite the lack of direct contact, the transfer of extraordinary power ensured that the mech officer had become affected by Vulcan's influence!

Even though Vulcan was primarily a craftsman as opposed to a warrior, his ability to enlighten people had a wondrous effect on Major Jankowski!

The RA mech officer's mood and emotions had already been pushed to the limit. The impact from the Hammer of Brilliance just happened to push them past a tipping point, causing Jankowski to undergo an unstoppable transformation!

An explosion of willpower occurred in his head as he surpassed his mortal boundaries for the first time in his life!

Chapter 5429 Explosion of Strength

Ves could not guarantee that he possessed the ability to induce a breakthrough on demand.

He had taken a major gamble by employing his transcendence glow on Major Jankowski.

Though the mech officer was in a better condition to accomplish a breakthrough due to the fact that he was fully invested in a battle against a superior opponent, his talent and mentality were not that great!

Simon Jankowski had much better chances of breaking through when he was decades younger and still retained a lot of confidence and optimism in himself.

This was the prime age bracket for any breakthroughs!

Any mech pilot that failed to break past their mortal limits in their twenties and thirties usually had no chance of defying their fates in the remainder of their careers.

The proportion of mech pilots breaking through when they were in their 50's, 60's and older was depressingly miniscule!

To be honest, there was no reason anymore for Major Jankowski to expect any drastic increases in strength anymore. His excellent education made it abundantly clear that his chances of becoming an expert pilot had dropped so much that his confidence in this area had dropped to the bottom.

That changed today.

Somehow, Major Jankowski had dug up many of the ambitions and regrets that he had buried in his mind.

He thought back on the high-spirited dreams of his youth and reflected on the failures that scarred his confidence.

Why was this future denied to him? How was it possible for his other colleagues to progress by leaps and bounds while Simon himself remained stuck at the ordinary limit?

It was not fair!

Perhaps many other mech pilots would already remain content with becoming a part of the most powerful mech organization in human civilization, but Jankowski had always set his sights on becoming one of the many god pilots that protected the human race!

Now, those dreams that he had buried a long time ago suddenly came up in his mind again.

Unlike the darkest moments of his past, Jankowski no longer thought that his ambitions were unattainable anymore.

Anything was possible as long as he worked hard enough to attain greater power!

Under the high pressure of the current battle and the comprehensive influence of the transcendence glow, Major Jankowski suddenly received a powerful impulse that merged his various thoughts and emotions together.

A critical mass had formed in his mind that exploded into a power that activated his spiritual potential and transformed his willpower!

At the same time as Major Jankowski broke through to the rank of expert candidate, a massive surge of power exploded from his depths.

It was as if all of those decades of quiet accumulation suddenly came loose, causing his rapidly expanding willpower to abruptly resonate with the mech that he was currently piloting!

The Elemental Lord gained a massive and violent infusion of strength that transformed its effective performance and elevated its performance in the most direct ways possible!

Though there was a massive lack of control and finesse to this temporary empowerment, it was more than enough to give the struggling drone mech the strength it needed to close the gap!

The exterior of the mech glowed with the power of forced resonance!

Not only that, but the accompanying fey that had been utilizing their own structures as physical shields to block some of the wind swordsman's attacks began to glow as well!

The power of forced resonance was magical and mysterious. It followed the purest intention of the mech pilot and not only simulated the power of true resonance, but also injected a lot of power into the machine, thereby causing it to perform way above its normal limits!

At this instance, the Elemental Lord's effective performance had temporarily reached the level of a low-tier expert pilot!

This made an immediate difference in battle. The empowered mech not only kept up with the speedy rhythm of the fast-moving tribulation manifestation, but also began to land successful attacks against the four-armed alien!

CRACKLE! CRACKLE! CRACKLE!

Major Jankowski had practically been reborn at this moment!

Although there was still a long distance away from undergoing actual apotheosis, breaking the mortal limit and becoming an expert candidate already signified that he had stepped onto the road of ascension!

Major Jankowski felt invincible at the moment! He wanted to shout out all of the frustrations that had been welling up in his heart all of this time.

Today, he had completely turned his life around and finally managed to unlock his hidden potential!

As a veteran mech officer of the Red Association, Simon Jankowski understood much better what his breakthrough signified!

It wasn't just the mech pilot that received a substantial boost. As his forced resonance flooded throughout the entire mech frame and the fey, the five brothers received a massive amount of feedback that rapidly enabled them to explode in strength!

The E energy vortex surrounding the Elemental Lord became a lot stronger as the five brothers were able to exert much stronger control over their respective elements!

Although they were still unable to combine four elements at once, they were able to leverage their current advantages a lot more extensively!

This had many different consequences to the current fight!

Just as the wind warrior sought to evade one of the Elemental Lord's sword strikes, the wood fey worked hard to utilize his elements to constrict the movements of the lightning tribulation.

Unlike before, the energy field produced by the metal-water-wood chain caused the entire surroundings to glow in green.

The strong artistic conception created by the fifth brother even started to take on a more physical shape due to the blessing of forced resonance, giving observers the illusion that a vague forest had formed around the Elemental Lord!

The wind warrior visibly slowed down even as its wind shield flared.

Illusionary tree branches started to surround and envelop the tribulation manifestation. Even if they failed to immobilize the wind warrior entirely, the wood energies still managed to wear down the wind energies and counteract the speed boost!

Now that the speed differential between the two had shrunk, the empowered Elemental Lord was able to confront the wind warrior a lot more directly!

The resonance-empowered fire fey unleashed blasts of purple fire that penetrated the fragile wind shield and burned a surprisingly large chunk of the wind warrior!

The earth fey on the other hand managed to fire an extraordinary heavy slug that penetrated through every barrier and obstacle and severed one of the major limbs of the wind warrior, causing it to lose control over one of its swords!

The wind warrior visibly winced from these twin blows, but it quickly used one its lesser arms to pick up the sword that was just about to drop to the ground.

Major Jankowski was not willing to waste the precious time while he was performing at his peak.

Under his growing willpower, the Elemental Lord blasted forward with an explosion of fire energy and charged straight towards the wind warrior!

CRACKLE! CRACKLE!

The Elemental Lord skillfully managed to read the wind warrior's reluctant attempt to evade and managed to lock one of the giant alien's sword while wrenching away the other one! Compared to a greater arm, the lesser arm of this alien species was obviously less suited to exert any significant force!

After the injured lightning manifestation lost a sword, the Elemental Lord took full advantage of the opening and unleashed a rapid series of slashes that tore into the wind warrior's torso and head!

Shortly after Major Jankowski had vented his anger at this astounding opponent, he commanded his Elemental Lord to pull back.

CRACKLE-BOOOOOM!

An explosion of tribulation lightning and tribulation wind engulfed the position of the defeated tribulation warrior!

The uncontrolled release of energies was so violent this time that the Elemental Lord had to rely on its forced resonance shield to prevent its mech frame from incurring significant damage.

"We won!"

"Meow!"

Ves let out a huge breath in relief. Not only did they manage to overcome the 30th wave, but the Elemental Lord also experienced a surge in growth.

The five brothers took full advantage of Jankowski's breakthrough and absorbed a lot of spiritual feedback.

However, their jubilation was short-lived when the 31st wave commenced a short moment later.

The oppression generated by angry storm clouds had grown a lot stronger. It was as if Major Jankowski's abrupt breakthrough broke their calculations!

The fourth tribulation warrior that descended from the clouds was yet another simulated copy of a four-armed alien swordsman.

This one wielded a radically different weapon. It held a thick and long slab of metal that looked even more exaggerated than the style of greatswords favored by the Swordmaidens!

The new alien swordsman clearly excelled in powerful strikes. Not only did the tribulation manifestation exude a deep sense of control over the element of earth, but its aura also radiated an air of force!

Combined with the tribulation lightning that made up its form, this supremely powerful tribulation manifestation could probably crush the Elemental Lord in a single blow as long as it managed to land a direct blow!

Major Jankowski and the five brothers did not need any guidance from Ves to figure out how to deal with such an opponent.

They were fully prepared to play hard-to-get and rely on their mobility advantage to avoid the heavy blade of the earth warrior.

In the meantime, the fire fey and the earth fey began to unleash much more powerful attacks than before.

Their abrupt growth had given them a greater ability to shape and control the energies at their disposal.

The fire fey for example began to compress its fire beam attacks into a pulse that compressed all of the destructive fire energies in a much shorter time interval!

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Violent purple explosions rocked the exterior of the earth warrior. Each of them possessed enough power to shatter the frame of a quasi-first-class mech.

Meanwhile, the earth fey did not let up and infused so much earth energy into its gauss rounds that their mass and force reached unreal proportions.

Every attack produced loud collision noises as the resonance-empowered gauss rounds sought to penetrate and annihilate anything in their path!

Yet much to the surprise of the five brothers, the earth swordsman showed no visible signs of damage.

With its much stronger and deeper mastery over the earth element, the new tribulation manifestation formed a defense that was as impenetrable as an ultradense rock!

No matter whether it was the explosive energy attacks of the fire fey or the heavy kinetic impacts of the earth fey, neither of the two empowered spurs managed to inflict any damage!

The only consolation was that the earth swordsman was nowhere near as fast as its predecessor.

The Elemental Lord was able to maintain its distance from the powerful tribulation manifestation and its exaggeratingly heavy greatsword.

Yet just as Major Jankowski and the five brothers struggled to form an effective strategy, the earth warrior suddenly exerted a strong energy field that constricted the surrounding space and caused every movement to be met with much greater resistance!

Ves grew alarmed when this occurred!

"This... this is a domain!"

Although it was not as strong and dense as a Saint Kingdom, the earth swordsman's comprehension and control over the earth element was so extensive that its influence had reached a surprisingly long range!

The Elemental Lord especially became locked by the earth warrior, making it seem as if the mech was unable to escape!

Major Jankowski's ability to generate forced resonance had just passed its high tide. His ability to empower the Elemental Lord could not become any stronger, which meant that he had no ability to break this weird new condition.

"My mech is hardly able to move! The earth fey has lost control over the surrounding earth E energy. The third brother is unable to stop the tribulation warrior from usurping his control!"

Ves widened his eyes in alarm!

That was bad!

The Elemental Lord only performed at its best when it was able to harness all five elements!

If the drone mech no longer had access to the earth element, then many important chains became inaccessible!

Ves could already feel the consequences around the cockpit.

The mech frame lost a lot of reinforcement due to the breakdown of the fire-earth-metal chain.

The water fey was no longer able to empower its own intact azure energy shield with the earth-metal-water chain.

The loss of a single element was enough to cripple the Elemental Lord, and that was when Major Jankowski was still in his breakthrough state!

The earth swordsman did not waste this opportunity. As soon as the drone mech had become immobilized by the power of earth, the tribulation manifestation slowly charged forward while holding aloft its gigantic greatsword.

Even if the earth swordsman was relatively slow to build its charge, it gradually built up an indomitable momentum that became more and more frightening.

The oppression exuded by this tribulation manifestation was at least an order of magnitude greater than that of the defeated wind swordsman!

Chapter 5430 Elemental Supremacy

It was as if the recently appeared earth swordsman turned the surrounding area into an earth arena.

There was no room for maneuver in front of the four-armed alien that wielded a gigantic greatsword.

The alien qi cultivator obviously knew that speed was not its forte, so it had worked hard to refine his control over the earth element to the point where he could generate a powerful force field that constrained the mobility of all of its adversaries!

Although this dense and heavy force field was not invincible, Major Jankowski and the Elemental Lord did not possess a strong enough grasp of their powers to break this constriction!

"It's coming!"

As the distance between the two steadily began to shrink, the constriction generated by the earth element became stronger and stronger.

The Elemental Lord was previously able to move slowly in different directions, but as the earth swordsman continued to crash towards its target, the mech had lost the ability to move!

A combination of panic and unwillingness welled up in Ves' mind. This was the 31th wave. He had hoped that his latest creation would be able to continue its growth and quickly master the ability to combine four as well as five elements at once!

All of that started to look increasingly less likely as the heartless and unfeeling earth warrior descended upon the Elemental Lord with a greatsword that was likely to sunder the mech in a single blow!

Ves closed his eyes as he tried to figure out how his mech could overcome this latest predicament.

Was there no other way to progress any further?

A lot of thoughts swirled in his mind.

Meanwhile, Major Jankowski and the five brothers did not think about defeat at all. Even when their situation had grown bleak, they still attempted to fight with the determination to see this through the end!

Yet as the unstoppable earth juggernaut loomed ever closer to the Elemental Lord, Major Jankowski could not help but sense an acute sense of death.

This sword was unstoppable!

The Elemental Lord could not evade this strike!

If he did not summon any further bursts of strength, he would likely go down with his mech!

The unprecedented pressure exerted by the attacking earth warrior caused Major Jankowski and the five brothers to exceed their previous highs.

They had begun to tap into their greater potential, causing each of them to increase their control over their elements!

The earth fey even started to show signs of retaking control over the surrounding earth E energies that had been denied by the tribulation manifestation.

Yet as the earth swordsman loomed closer and closer, the Elemental Lord was still unable to break loose from the force field.

Major Jankowski gritted his teeth as he tried to squeeze his newly grown willpower beyond its limit. He wanted to strengthen and prolong the state of forced resonance that was empowering the Elemental Lord, yet no matter how much he wanted to produce another miracle, the painful truth was that he had already exploded his potential once.

It was impossible for a mech pilot to attain a double breakthrough!

It had never been done throughout the history of mechs, and for good reason. It took a lot of accumulation for a mech pilot to become qualified to advance to the rank of expert candidate and expert pilot.

Masterwork mech or not, the Elemental Lord was only able to play a facilitating role to the progression of a mech pilot.

Just as the earth warrior was about to crush the trapped mech in half with its gigantic greatsword, Ves could no longer deny the reality around him anymore.

Dismay welled up in his mind. He had so many expectations for his altered Fey Project. He at least hoped that it would have been able to fight its way through the latter half of this exaggeratingly powerful lightning tribulation.

However, the lack of preparation was too fatal for his chances for his latest work to ascend to an entirely new height.

Ves felt incredibly sorry about the Elemental Lord for his inability to strengthen his creation any further.

For the first time in his career, Ves strongly felt that he had failed as a mech designer.

Due to his many mistakes and shortcomings, he was unable to provide his latest and possibly his greatest work with a viable path to survival.

Before Ves allowed this painful admission to defeat to depress his mood any further, he first needed to address a more acute issue.

"We lost. We need to go right now!"

His voice seemed to shake Major Jankowski out of his trance.

The new expert candidate had been trying to squeeze his potential even if there was nothing left anymore.

Though an RA mech officer like Simon should know better than to deny this reality, his recent breakthrough had given him an inflated sense of confidence.

He still believed that he and the five brothers could turn this situation around!

Seeing that Major Jankowski was still too deeply immersed in this impossible challenge, Ves decided to take matters into his own hands.

"We need to go right now, so forgive me for doing this!"

Ves transmitted a series of emergency commands that produced several reactions in quick succession.

"UHH!"

First, the neural interface physically disengaged from the rest of the mech, causing the man-machine connection to collapse in the most abrupt fashion possible!

Major Jankowski immediately suffered trauma from the forced disconnection. He had lost all of his wits due to this damaged approach!

Next, the rear of the Elemental Lord blasted open, leaving an open avenue for the cockpit to eject from the mech frame.

However, the cockpit jerked and screamed without managing to make any progress.

The cockpit was stuck in place!

It appeared that the force field generated by the looming earth swordsman had grown so strong that not even the ejection process could escape the strengthening net.

Ves already expected this to happen. Fortunately, much of the focus of the earth swordsman was locked onto the main body and its fey.

"Lucky, you can make your own escape!"

"Meow?!"

Just as Lucky hurriedly phased through the cockpit of the Elemental Lord, Ves' armored form bent down and pulled Major Jankowski out of the cockpit seat.

Although it was a little awkward, Ves managed to embrace the taller and more muscular mech officer in a bearhug.

He then proceeded to focus all of his concentration onto the expanded phasewater in his blood.

The recent lightning tribulation had not only caused his phasewater concentration to soar by an unknown extent, but also inflated his true body to many times his former size!

That ultimately meant that the quantity of phasewater running through his veins and organs had abruptly increased by several kilograms!

Ves tried to activate all of the phasewater that had spontaneously formed inside his body.

Though the resistance generated by the earth swordsman's force field was still significant, Ves ultimately managed to overcome it with the help of his newfound strength!

"1... WILL... PUSH... THROUGH!"

Crack!

A sharp sound erupted from the location of Ves and the mech officer.

Both of them had disappeared from the cockpit!

Immediately afterwards, a pair of armored figures dropped onto a grassy hill and rolled a bit before they lost their momentum.

Ves groaned as he suffered a strong ache throughout his body. Trying to displace himself several hundred meters away with an additional passenger had stretched his new capabilities to the limit.

The problem was that he had originally aimed to move at least a kilometer away from his former location.

The fact that his journey got cut short due to the strong resistance produced by the earth swordsman's force field was bad news!

"Brace yourself!"

Ves possessed enough awareness to manually activate his personal shield generator, causing it to produce a small but strong barrier that was enough to resist most attacks launched by mechs for a short amount of time.

Just a split-second later, the earth swordsman chopped its enormous greatsword from top to bottom, completely bisecting the immobilized and forcibly deactivated Elemental Lord into two messy lightning-scarred pieces!

CRACKLE!

Boom boom boom!

Secondary explosions quickly engulfed the mech frame before the ruined power reactor failed to contain all of its power and produced a violent explosion that hardly managed to faze the solid earth swordsman!

After enduring 30 continuous challenges, the Elemental Lord ultimately failed to overcome the might of the 31st wave.

As if the lightning tribulation wanted to rub this failure into Ves' face, the earth swordsman lost cohesion and exploded in place, releasing all of the tribulation lightning that made up for its body at once!

CRACKLE-CRACKLE-CRACKLE!

A concentrated storm of lightning exploded in every direction, instantly engulfing the remains of the bisected mech frame as well as the damaged but relatively intact living fey!

The remnants of the Elemental Lord did not stand a chance against this punishment.

The five elements mech had failed to pass the test issued by the lightning tribulation, so it had lost its right to exist.

The five brothers that developed a lot of hopes and dreams about their future as an amazing living mech all became ruthlessly crushed by the lightning tribulation that originated from another galaxy!

As the explosion of golden currents mercilessly disintegrated each and every aspect that Ves had painstakingly put into the Elemental Lord, the surrounding terrain got blasted by all of the collateral damage!

CRACKLE!

The energy shield surrounding Ves' form got struck by one of the escaping lightning bolts.

The protective barrier had reached its limit and exploded in a violent fashion!

"Ahh!"

Fortunately for Ves and Major Jankowski, the self-destructive explosion was violent but short. It ended as soon as it came, thereby saving them both from getting harmed by the final blow of the lightning tribulation.

The dark clouds that cast a strong shadow over the landscape had already begun to fade.

The tribulation had done its job, so there was no more reason to waste any time on this trivial planet.

The oppressive air quickly made way for a desolate wind that did not bring any relief.

Instead, a rain of black ash dropped from the skies and blanketed the surrounding terrain with an awful burning scent.

As Ves dazedly shook his head and recovered his wits, he looked blankly at the falling pieces of ash.

These were the remains of the Elemental Lord.

After being subjected to the ultimate power of destruction, not a single piece of the Elemental Lord could resist the punishment from the heavens.

Neither the physical nor spiritual aspects had managed to escape this fate.

Ves felt depressed in a way he had never felt before. The pain in his heart was strong.

The Elemental Lord was practically his baby from his perspective.

Ves had worked harder than ever to bring a beautiful and promising child to life, only to attract an unreasonably heavy punishment due to the fact that he had violated a taboo.

His living mech had died too soon!

The five brothers had not even lived for a single day. They had spent much of the short time of their lives fighting for their own right to exist. Struggle characterized the entire extent of their brief existence in this reality.

"It's not fair..."

Ves felt a lot of regrets about his lost mech.

Not only did he lose the most brilliant masterwork mech that he had created up to this date, but he had also suffered a personal defeat that completely sapped his confidence in his own work!

"Meow..."

A damaged-looking gem cat slowly descended onto Ves and Jankowski's position.

Lucky looked a bit burned and frazzled, but his strengthened archemetal body somehow managed to withstand the lightning explosion.

Ves felt so discouraged about his failure to save his own work that he did not even pay attention to Lucky's appearance.

All he had on his mind was thinking about all of the decisions he could have made that could have given his Elemental Lord a better chance to live past this lightning tribulation.

"I'm so bad at my job... I still have a long way to go before my work is good enough..."