

The Mech 5521

Chapter 5521 Coasting On Success

Though the story told by Commander Ikeon Powell did not sound like a big deal to those who already ruled at the top, it was incredibly inspiring to the people at the grassroots!

Many mech pilots entered the Red Ocean in the hopes of fulfilling their dreams.

Glory, power, wealth, territory. Many dreamers passed through the greater beyonder gate, believing that the dwarf galaxy with the red nebulas offered a chance for them to fulfill their dreams.

While the opportunities of the Red Ocean had indeed enabled a small proportion of pioneers to prosper, the vast majority of humans failed to improve their station in life.

If they were lucky enough, their status and wealth remained relatively stagnant. An ordinary soldier in the old galaxy was still an ordinary soldier in the new frontier.

What few people understood was that the success of the few were built on the corpses of the many. Too many people had decided to chase their dreams, only to die in a galaxy that was far away from humanity's home ground.

All sorts of conflicts followed after the human immigrants and led to a lot of failures.

Entire pioneering fleets disappeared. Colonies burned as they were razed by hostile forces. Many investments went bust, ruining the lives of many hopefuls who sought to reinvent their lives in the new galaxy.

The opening of the Red Ocean introduced naive and underprepared people to the cutthroat environment of a true frontier.

The start of the Age of Dawn changed everything, but the nature of the Red Ocean still remained the same.

The biggest difference was that many humans were no longer engaged in fighting against each other anymore.

In the face of an overwhelming external threat, everyone had at least a bit of sense and turned their weapons against the aliens.

Unfortunately, the races who treated humanity as intruders played by completely different rules! The aliens never showed mercy. They fought with little restraint. Many of the aliens conscripted by the Red Cabal fought hard as they believed that they were literally fighting on behalf of their native gods.

A fight between mechs and warships was unequal from the start. The natives of the Red Ocean had so much accumulation at their disposal that only a fraction of their total warmaking potential already led to many tragedies at the border regions.

The tale of the Skinny Rattlers was not entirely unique, but people needed to hear more about such exploits.

They needed to understand on a more visceral level how much these former mercenaries had sacrificed to prevent the hostile aliens from penetrating deeper into human space.

Yet that was not enough. People needed to take the Red War more seriously, but they shouldn't get scared to the point where they lost their courage to volunteer for service!

As an honorary citizen of the Red Association, Ves needed to produce the opposite effect in order to advance the objectives of his patron.

The guest speaker invited by the Larkinsons therefore ended his tale on an uplifting note.

Though many fighters of the Skinny Rattlers had fought and died over the course of slowing down the alien aggressors, they paved the way for the surviving members to shed their old identities as mercenaries and become hereditary rulers over an entire planet!

Such a swift and speedy class transformation was unimaginable in the old galaxy. The Skinny Rattlers fulfilled the dreams of trillions of ordinary humans who yearned to rule their own planets one day.

While the tale of the Skinny Rattlers primarily centered around the exploits of Commander Ikeon Powell and his increasingly more battle-hardened troops, their mechs played an integral role to their success.

It was hard for people to imagine that the Skinny Rattlers would have the courage to volunteer in the fight against the native aliens.

It was even harder to believe that this band of former mercenaries could actually punch above their weight and display so much more ferocity against the hostile aliens!

Whether directly or indirectly, the living mechs of the Skinny Rattlers supported their human partners every step of the way.

The LMC wanted to make it clear that its products had played an essential role in the rise of these mercenaries-turned-landowners!

The only issue was that many people found it difficult to determine how extensively their unique properties enhanced their performance on the battlefield!

"So these living mechs only make their mech pilots feel better? You can easily produce the same results by injecting stimulants into their bodies. Wait, do these glows work against the aliens as well?"

"From what I can gather, the positive changes produced by these living mechs are mainly psychological in nature. I can believe that these living mechs have caused the Skinny Rattlers to earn more success in their battles, but how many of their mech pilots got killed because their artificial emotions overrode their sense of self-preservation? Commander Powell is much more selfish than he appears. He has continually sacrificed the lives of his men to fuel his own ambitions. Once he is enfeoffed as a baron, who will remember the people who actually paid the price for his ascension?"

"These living mechs sound fishy. They are too autonomous for my liking. It is only a matter of time before they get hacked. AIs are certainly useful, but giving them too much control over our systems is just asking for trouble! I would never trust a 'living mech' that is able to move by itself and fire its weapons without the need for human intervention."

A lot of people sitting in the seats of Phoca Arena talked with each other in low voices.

More people exchanged their opinions as they watched the broadcast of the product reveal from remote.

Ves was able to get a sense of all of the questions and doubts surrounding his living mechs.

As much as they grew impressed by the example set by the Skinny Rattlers, many people who were not familiar with the products of the LMC still needed more persuasion to embrace their existence.

This was where Ves was for. After building up so much anticipation, it was time for him to enter the spotlight and clear up the confusion.

He reached out with his hand and rubbed Lucky's head.

"Are you ready to make an appearance, buddy?"

The caped gem cat looked annoyed.

"Meow meow."

"It's all part of the show, Lucky. Your appearance alongside me will enhance my stature among the true rulers of red humanity. Not everyone has a cute archemetal contraption by his side like me. So few people have managed to figure out archetech that any adaptation of it is priceless. The first-raters will not look down on me so easily so long as they recognize your true value. Don't you think it sounds great for you to get admired by so many people at once? You will earn the status of the most expensive cat in the Red Ocean!"

"Meow!"

After Ves pepped up his cat, his nerves had eased a bit. This was an important presentation for him and his clan. Expectations were so high that he could already feel the weight of people's attention crushing him on another level!

He took a few more breaths before he exited backstage and floated above the main podium.

Commander Powell had already left at this time.

Only a single spotlight shone in the arena, and it was aimed squarely at Ves.

Bombastic music played as many people started to clap at his appearance!

After so much waiting, the mech designer that they had all been waiting for had finally arrived!

"Is that what tier 3 galactic citizens are like? He looks so handsome!"

"Now that is how a true leader should present himself."

"With a getup like that, I wouldn't be surprised if he crowned himself emperor of red humanity."

"Is that cat made out of archemetal?! Where did he learn this tech?! Where can I get an archemetal pet of my own? Please contact the Larkinsons right away. I MUST buy this cat!"

Everyone became impressed by Ves in one way or another. This was not just because he got dressed in a flamboyant outfit or because he deliberately showed off his archemetal cat.

Ves was a living legend. Many people were at least somewhat familiar with his history by now, and he had made many achievements that were completely atypical of any other Senior Mech Designer!

His living mechs had made an enormous impact on the second-class mech market. The products of the LMC had especially changed the mech landscape of the Krakatoa Middle Zone and the Magair Middle Zone.

All of his accomplishments turned him into a mech designer that came across as larger than life.

What also caused him to stand out was that he gave off a similar impression to his living mechs.

Ves had silently unveiled his glow. He no longer suppressed anymore because this was not an instance where he wanted to remain unnoticed.

This time, Ves deliberately revealed a part of his transcendent state. Though his appearance did not undergo any obvious changes, there were many subtle shifts that amplified the instincts of deference and admiration in the hearts of many people.

This was the differentiation in life state.

A glow was nothing but a phenomenon that was produced when two entities of different strength came into contact with each other.

The greater the extent that ordinary people looked up at Ves as an omnipotent powerhouse, the more he had evolved beyond his original mortal self!

Ves even gained the illusion that he had become a god to all of these people!

It took a considerable effort for him to rein in this delusion.

After the clapping started to subside, he began to address his audience in a firm and steady cadence.

"People of red humanity. Thank you for devoting a small part of your time to listening to what I have to say. Earlier, you have heard the tale of one of the Living Mech Corporation's most loyal customers. The Skinny Rattlers are but one of many groups that have utilized our living mechs to great effect."

Ves waved his hand. Many projected mechs came into view. Each of them consisted of the latest versions of the commercial mech lines sold by the LMC.

Machines such as the Desolate Soldier, the Sanctuary and the Hymenoptera each possessed their distinctive strengths and style.

"From the moment I designed my first original mech less than two decades ago, I set out to fulfill an ambition. It is a simple one. I have seen many instances where people treat their mechs as lifeless machines and tools. There is nothing wrong with that, but there is much more to mechs than you realize. Every living mech has the potential to become alive, and not just in an abstract sense. When you extrapolate this thought far enough, you will end up with a mech that is intelligent, capable and self-aware. If mechs such as these become more common, why not regard them as living entities akin to humans?"

This was an old and familiar goal to Ves, but it still bore repeating. Many people had never put any serious thought about this question. Was it truly desirable to treat mechs similar to fellow human beings?

This was a thought-provoking question to say the least!

Even Ves had not yet fully made his mind on how this should be implemented!

Ves continued his pitch.

"Since those early days, I worked towards this singular direction. My living mechs became increasingly more sophisticated. From the invention of glows to the addition of design spirits, I owe much of my success to the signature features that I created in those times."

Ves looked down at each of his projected mechs.

"Yet technology never rests. Times have changed. The Age of Dawn has rewritten many of the rules we took for granted. As new technologies and possibilities have emerged, our Living Mech Corporation must evolve as well. We may have been silent for a time, but we have not been coasting on our past successes. After many months of focused development, we have finally managed to attain crucial breakthroughs in our research that has enabled us to design a mech that truly embodies the potential of the Hyper Generation!"

Chapter 5522 A Lecture On E Energy

When Ves referred to the new technologies that became available after the start of the Age of Dawn, many people became interested in what he intended to announce today.

Given that his previous mech models were all based on unorthodox design principles, a lot of people expected that his latest innovations were bound to be unique as well!

The previous presentation had already done a good job at highlighting the unique traits of the products of the LMC.

Whereas other mech companies often tried to differentiate their mechs by boasting about their superior armor systems or their specialized firearms, the mechs sold by the Living Mech Corporation always became known by their weirder traits.

Mechs that were alive? Glows derived from mysterious existences that sounded like god? How could a mech designer even come up with these design applications?!

Though the LMC has long moved past the stage where it struggled to prove the value of its living mechs to a wider audience, there were still many people who still maintained their skepticism towards living mechs.

People simply didn't understand.

Ves could do little about this in the past, but he was confident that this time would be different.

Previously, the problem that Ves had issue with was that the advantages of living mechs did not translate into obvious performance improvements.

It was hard to argue that his mechs were better when they did not enjoy any obvious performance boosts to their attack power or defensive attributes.

Living mechs were so abstract and difficult to quantify that people who mainly paid attention to the numbers never really thought they were on the same level as the mechs designed by rival mech companies.

Ves slowly smiled when he thought that he could finally break this curse.

"Living mechs have continued to evolve since I first introduced them to the mech market. Many of the additions that I have made are relatively minor, but there are times when I have made major

leaps in technology. The armed forces of my clan make use of many of my powerful innovations. In time, their benefits may flow to the commercial mechs that I will design in the future."

As he spoke, he continued to exude a glow that radiated a strong sense of vitality that was amplified by his strengthened body.

Everyone listened carefully to his words. Few people showed any sign of disrespect by talking among themselves. This was a clear sign that he commanded their attention.

"Meow."

Lucky continued to act cute by floating by his side and capturing the hearts of many cat lovers.

Though his presence diverted quite a bit of attention, Ves did not mind. The true purpose of showing off his cat was to make sure that first-raters took him seriously.

Anyone who was able to gain access to archotech in a time where it was still an obscure secret had to be a bigshot.

At least that would be the logic used by many powerful individuals.

"Only the Xenotechnician managed to fully reverse engineered archotech to the point where he can reproduce it well enough to create a mechanical cat. Has Professor Larkinson received his teachings or his gift?"

"Don't be fooled by the innocent look of that cat. That Lucky is a killer that hides great power. My intuition is screeching in alarm whenever I stare at it. That cat is evil, I tell you. Evil!"

As his audience entertained many thoughts, Ves continued to explain the development of his living mechs.

He did not try to bore his audience with technical details. He simply wanted them to gain a better understanding of how much he worked to improve the state of his living machines.

A few minutes passed by when Ves finally came back to the current age.

"As I have said before, the Age of Dawn changed everything. Mechs are experiencing the same upheaval as many of them have inexplicably become more powerful due to changes in our environment."

His words continued to stroke the moods of many avid listeners. He felt as if he was pulling half the Red Ocean into his narrative.

Ves waved his hand again. The projections began to depict a slideshow of different mechs.

Each of them were designed and produced shortly after the new possibilities became available.

While they shared many differences, one of the traits they had in common was that they were all hyper mechs!

All of the displayed mechs incorporated hyper materials in one way or another. This caused their performance as well as their visuals to become considerably more impressive than before.

"Look familiar? I have selected a number of popular mech models. Many of them were already released in the first three months after the start of the Hyper Generation. What is more interesting is

that the mechs completed there in the last few months are barely better in their utilization of hyper technology."

This was not an entirely fair assessment. Ves certainly made a lot of fans and designers of existing hyper mechs upset.

Hyper technology was not easy for people to comprehend at the start. It was commendable how the fastest mech designers quickly implemented rudimentary hyper technology applications in their existing mech designs.

Sure, the upgrades were shallow and superficial for the most part. Grafting on hyper materials and arranging them in a specific fashion onto mech designs that had never been designed with these features in mind often led to subpar mech designs.

Yet the market did not care. Many customers wanted to pilot the first possible hyper mechs came along!

It was only later that a lot of mech pilots and the buyers responsible for procuring the machines learned to differentiate the good from the bad.

Hyper technology may be based on an extraordinary form of energy, but it obeyed many rules that gradually became more defined.

This was why the mechs designed in the last two or so months had begun to draw out the greater potential of this tech.

The Sparrow Storm Mark XII released by SKL Mech Industries was one of many hyper mechs that had begun to strengthen people's ability to fight against the alien menace.

"Impressive, are they not?" Ves made a coy smile. "Each application of hyper materials enables mechs to utilize E energy in a direct and obvious fashion. From adding fire to energy beams to amplifying the toughness of armor plating, the mech industry has been tirelessly working to make their machines stronger in any way they can. Day after day, month after month, mech designers and other tech developers have ceaselessly worked to advance red humanity's ability to harness the power of E energy radiation."

Ves did not hold any animosity towards the hyper mechs designed by others. The machines might not be the most sophisticated, but they delivered on their basic promises and granted superior performance compared to the mechs designed in the previous generation.

"Yet for all of their progress, the vast majority of hyper mechs never delve any deeper in the more advanced applications of E energy radiation. All of the haste put into their creation produced quick results, but that has left their designers no time to sit down and explore the greater nuances of the new forces that we have at our disposal."

There were many reasons for Ves to look down on the mechs designed with shallow applications of hyper technology.

"As respectable as these early works may be, their relevance is limited so long as they are not updated with more developed designs." He spoke. "Too many of my competitors are unaware of the forces they are contending against. This is not their fault. E energy is still a new phenomena to far too many of them. They must still work hard to comprehend the very basics of hyper technology. As

for E-technology? That is too far away from them. It is nearly impossible for them to work on the latter when they cannot even perceive E energy directly."

Ves began to smirk.

"While many of my colleagues in the mech industry only learned enough hyper technology to quickly slap their design solutions onto their existing works, I have been working on deepening my fundamental understanding of the forces that have enriched our understanding of the universe."

He proceeded to showcase his progress by stretching out a hand and summoning a fireball!

This did not shock the audience right away. There were so many technological sleight of hands that the fireball could have been generated by a thousand different ways.

Aside from a small number of people with unusual strength and abilities, the majority of the viewers simply thought little of the illusionary fireball.

Ves casually tossed it aside, causing the fireball to fall and scatter against an azure energy shield.

He utilized his improved comprehension of water to generate a stream of water. Though he was not able to control it as finely as a true qi cultivator, he was still able to perform small tricks such as looping it around him in a circle.

This was another unspoken message. Only the right people would understand what he tried to convey with his seemingly trivial parlor tricks.

"E energy is a fundamental source of power that most of us have yet to explore in depth." Ves lectured his audience while Lucky continually tried to dodge the streams of water that threatened to splash his body. "The changes it has wrought to our society are profound and multifaceted. One of its most defining traits that enables us to exceed the limitations of conventional technology is that it responds to conscious thoughts and emotions."

Ves clasped his hands together in a gesture of mercy.

The water that he had been playing with gradually began to glow and exude a faint attraction to many people.

"By showing kindness, we can turn plain water into a nurturing liquid substance that can reduce inflammations and sterilize wounds."

Ves raised his hand and formed a fist!

The water sprout turned into a fist that increased in size and volume.

"By focusing on our aggression, we can turn water into a projectile that can deal a surprising amount of damage."

He then proceeded to spread out his hands above his head as if he was pleading for deliverance.

The water fist rose into the air and began to disperse into a miniature cloud.

"By thinking about cultivating crops, we can turn water into rain that can nurture the land."

All of these transformations looked rather basic, so few people were impressed by the displays. They had witnessed much more amazing feats of 'magic' in fantasy dramas and other works of art.

Ves inwardly smirked. This was just the beginning.

He began to exert more strength. While he was unable to mobilize a lot of E energy by himself, his companion spirit was different!

As a spiritual entity that was expressly designed to devour and manipulate spiritual energy from the start, Blinky was much more of a qi cultivator than Ves!

With the secret assistance of the Star Cat, Ves began to exert more power while spinning his hands in a circular motion. This caused him to summon more water.

Soon enough, he formed a large and glowing whirlpool that spun right behind his back.

The whirlpool spun increasingly faster, causing it to accumulate more power.

What was even weirder was that strange shapes began to poke out of the whirlpool from time to time.

Those with sharp enough eyes could recognize that those water protrusions looked like dragons!

This caused Ves to give off the impression that he had become a god who commanded the power of water.

His aura grew stronger and more obvious. More and more attendees within Phoca Arena began to realize that Ves might be doing more than weaving an illusion with the projection systems!

"Humans such as you and I have unlimited potential. By methodically applying our mind and spirit, we can command these energies by ourselves, allowing us to wield additional power without the use of machines!"

Chapter 5523 The Next Evolution of Living Mechs

Most of the people watching the broadcast had yet to be introduced to the greater meaning of E energy.

These were mostly average people who had grown up in a society that depended on technology for almost everything.

This was why they did not take Ves' lecture so seriously. Even if he happened to be right, what did his lesson have to do with them? Ordinary folk were too far removed from majestic displays of power!

It didn't matter. Ves was doing them a favor. Each of them would realize sooner or later that his lesson was more relevant to them than they could ever imagine.

The powerful whirlpool behind Ves broke apart as Blinky began to exert his control in a different fashion.

The large mass of water gradually reformed into a visage that looked like a miniature copy of the Azure Tornado Dragon that he once fought against!

Though Ves had decided to feed its entire spirituality to the Oceancaller, his brief but 'intimate' contact with the mutated beast enabled him to memorize many of its details!

The water version of the Azure Tornado Dragon did not just look like a water mold of this once-powerful beast.

It also imitated its original aura!

Of course, its glow was not as good as the authentic version. Ves only comprehended so much of the concepts that the Azure Tornado Dragon innately mastered. The boost in understanding granted by the Oceancaller also had its limits.

The demonstration of power still managed to produce a greater impact than usual. More and more people began to suspect that Ves was teaching them a lesson that was more profound than they realized!

Ves blamed the Red Two for the reluctance to disclose the greater truth surrounding E energy.

He understood why the mechers and many other groups refrained from teaching everything. Knowledge was power, and it was better if it was concentrated at the top.

E energy could be dangerous in the wrong hands. Red humanity had not yet developed enough safety measures to detect and counteract the many ways it could be abused.

This was a persistent policy problem at the top. Multiple factions had formed around the question of how extensively society should gain access to the methods that enabled people to wield E energy to a greater degree.

Ves had yet to make up his mind on the issue. His work made it so that he was leaning on the side of greater liberalization and knowledge sharing.

Yet he was not naive enough to know that a lot of individuals would definitely find a way to abuse the power of E energy for their own selfish desires.

The most powerful humans at the bottom were especially prone to extreme behavior!

Back during the Age of Mechs, they could hardly make any waves due to the fact that individual power meant nothing in a huge technological society.

The mechs and warships of the Mech Trade Association could easily crush any opposition that threatened the stability of human space!

This time was different. From what Ves had learned from various sources, qi cultivators relied heavily on talent and comprehension to increase their power and longevity. Special resources could also help them overcome their lack of qualifications and improve their conditions.

That alone was enough to prevent the vast majority of people from making rapid progress, but there were always outliers who were able to leapfrog their way to power!

Perhaps the upper echelon had already put Ves into the same category. He was no different from the ordinary folk that the leading figures were wary about.

Fortunately, Ves had the good sense to build a good relationship with the mechers. By proving with his actions and deeds that he was willing to abide by their rules and make them happy.

He wondered how long that would last.

Ves knew that he was definitely pushing a few boundaries today. Perhaps the Transhumanist Faction would be happy to see him reveal a small portion of the greater truth of reality, but the fleeters and many other powerful groups might not be too happy with him at the moment!

Too bad.

After making his point clear, Ves and Blinky dispersed the vivid and animated water version of the Azure Tornado Dragon.

"Human beings have unlimited potential." He repeated to his audience. "Many of us may start out weak, but through the power of growth, we can evolve into better, smarter and stronger versions of ourselves. The god pilots and the Star Designers that many of us admire so much are the modern pinnacles of what we can attain through continuous growth!"

It was not always proper to invoke these esteemed powerhouses in what amounted to a glorified sales pitch, but Ves deliberately mentioned them in order to put his audience in the right mindset.

Ves smirked. "If humans can grow, what about mechs? E energy is a fundamental power that can transform the properties and attributes of any object. It can imbue mechs with the power of life. This not only makes them smarter and more responsible, but also grants them the ability to grow if they did not have it already."

He waved his arm, summoning projections of third-party mechs standing alongside LMC mechs.

"Each mech possesses a small but inherent capacity for growth. They can even break through certain barriers and gain many traits that can only be found in more powerful machines." Ves revealed. "Yet most machines are never designed with growth in mind, so their capacity to evolve past their physical limitations have always been constrained."

Ves raised his arm and swept them in front of his face. Old battle footage of numerous familiar Larkinson mechs filled up the mech arena.

Over the past year, numerous old mechs derived from models such as the Bright Warrior, the Valkyrie Redeemer and the Transcendent Punisher evolved into third order living mechs!

Each of these mechs had outgrown their original templates and embarked on a unique growth trajectory.

While they would always share a connection with their original designs, third order living mechs fared best if they received targeted modifications.

Each third order living mech gave off the impression that there was a beating heart beneath all of the strong and sturdy alloy plating.

It was an odd sensation and one that felt contradictory to many people.

Regardless, now that Ves had introduced them to the crowd, it became easier for these people to distinguish third order living mechs from their more mundane counterparts.

This was not a lecture on living mechs per se, so Ves was preparing to unveil the new mech that he always wanted to present.

The projections disappeared. Much of Phoca Arena's interior descended into darkness. The only source of light that remained was the spotlight shining onto Ves and his cat.

Lucky had perched onto Ves' shoulder by this time. He sat in a more attentive posture that made it seem as if he was playing the role of a ceremonial guard.

"Meow."

Mechanical sounds began to spread across the empty mech arena.

Pretty much every mech pilot was familiar with them as these were the noises produced by mechs on the move.

The darkness and the projected shadow curtains ensured that the mechs stepping into the enormous central arena remained clouded in darkness.

Faint whining noises could be heard as well. These were the tell-tale sounds of a combination of antigrav modules and thrusters that were usually associated with medium-sized bots and drones.

The more perceptive and augmented people in the arena were faintly able to estimate how many mechs and spurs were on the move.

What puzzled a number of them was that the estimated quantity of drones was not high relative to the amount of mechs.

Ordinary drone mechs tended to deploy a multitude of disposable spurs. The Sparrow Storm's multitude of Sparrows had defined this mech type for so many generations that it had become the widely accepted standard in the mech industry.

As the mechs in the dark continued to step closer to the center of the mech arena, Ves continued his speech.

"Growth and evolution is central to progress. Without moving forward, we deny ourselves the ability to improve our capabilities. Just as we can foster our own growth, we can advance our technologies as well. As a tool-using race, humanity's strength has always been defined by the tech we use to amplify our own strength. My living mechs have made a lot of progress since I initially brought them to life."

The loud metal-on-metal footsteps ceased once the mechs reached their assigned locations.

Darkness still kept the machines out of sight, though a faint amount of light shining from indeterminate angles caused their contours to become more visible.

The mechs did not look too big or broad at first glance. Their frames were rather slender, but that was usually expected when they had deployed their spurs.

The only reason for drone mechs to bulk up was if they needed to accommodate greater quantities of spurs.

The more advanced versions of the Sparrow Storm were considerably broader and heavier than their base model!

This reinforced the impression that the upcoming new drone mech evidently did not emphasize quantity all that much.

This was not a conventional design choice to say the least. It made at least a bit of sense in the current day as smaller spurs found it challenging to inflict serious damage onto alien warships, but smaller quantities of spurs somewhat defeated the purpose of fielding drone mechs.

Was the LMC truly preparing to introduce a worthwhile new mech model?

It had to be worth all of the hype if the Larkinsons and the mechers spent a lot of effort into organizing this product reveal.

"The Living Mech Corporation has remained quiet in the past year. My fellow researchers and I have chosen to stay out of the generational opening rush and work towards developing meaningful improvements. Now that we have completed multiple significant advancements, I am happy to reveal our first proper commercial mech line. Compared to many of the products that have been put on sale, my latest work has been properly adapted to the Hyper Generation from the ground up. You can all rest assured that it is an original mech design that is fully made with hyper materials and E energy in mind."

Drums started to roll as the time to unveil his mechs had come.

Ves exuded a stronger glow as his enthusiasm reached a peak.

"Let me introduce you to the tricksters that can fool your sensors, the lords that are born to wield the potential of multiple elements and the spirited machines that contain multiple interconnected lives. Please grace your eyes on the Fey Fianna!"

Many lights began to fall upon the different variants and configurations of the Fey Fianna, casting them in a sculpted light that caused these machines to show off their exteriors in a dramatic fashion!

The music became more bombastic to the point where a lot of attendees applauded the long-awaited reveal.

The Fey Fianna not only showed their appearances to the public for the first time, but their fey also made an impression to all of the viewers.

Each fey exuded a more constrained sense of vitality. The fey also looked surprisingly large and bulky when compared to other spurs.

This gave the fey a greater sense of weight and importance. No matter whether they were armed with luminar crystal cannons or energy shields, the fey looked like they possessed an attitude that hinted at independent control.

Yet they also circled around their drone mechs under the careful and deliberate arrangement of their mech pilots.

This made it seem as if the large spurs were more akin to dogs on a leash than mindless bots that could not do anything without receiving any deliberate commands!

Whether that was good or bad remained to be seen, but the new mech certainly aroused the interest of a lot of people!

Chapter 5524 Thin Protection

"The Fey Fianna is the next evolution of living mechs!"

The next evolution of living mechs!

As the sharp lighting of Phoca Arena lit up the contours and part of the surface of the newly unveiled Fey Fiannas, the attendees developed high expectations for this new product.

If Ves failed to meet those exaggerated expectations, then he was bound to suffer a serious blow to his reputation.

This could not be allowed to happen!

Ves believed so much in his new product that he was willing to put his credibility at stake!

The new Fey Fiannas did not remain motionless. They moved their limbs and took a few steps forward to demonstrate their fluidity and ease of movement.

The sharp lights caused the new mechs to alternate in shadow and light. Nobody with normal eyes were able to gain a clear view of the new machines, but that made them look all the more impressive!

The contours of the Fey Fianna appeared to be fairly rounded and soft.

This was a small deviation of Ves's visual design language.

Normally, he preferred to blend rounded surfaces with a modicum of sharper angles. The blend between geometric angles and organic human-like shapes elegantly symbolized the merger between life and mechs.

Ves chose to lean more towards an organic visual design this time. The Fey Fianna were more alive than any other mech he had designed up to this point.

It was not only the most advanced implementation of a living mech, but its very name and theme also evoked the image of the mythical fey prancing in a forest.

The 9 Fey Fiannas were all coated in mottled green. Each of the three distinct variants on display possessed different accents and markings to distinguish them from each other.

The Standard Edition of the Fey Fianna possessed the fewest bells and whistles. Its exterior held the least amount of markings, making it seem as if it could blend into any arboreal environment.

What was regrettable was that the fey did not resemble their namesakes. They were shaped more like traditional egg-shaped constructs. While they were far more rounded than the angular Sparrows of the Sparrow Storm, as Ves had clearly chosen function over style in this case.

The Elite Edition obviously looked to be a step up from the Standard Edition. Its superior materials and tech led to many subtle changes to the quasi-first-class mech design. Its exterior bore more silver accents in order to differentiate this particular variant better. Even the formula of its coating had been upgraded to a much more superior one that was much more resistant to damage!

The Larkinson Edition looked like a reskinned version of the Elite Edition. On the surface, the mech utilized nearly identical high-quality parts as the previous variant, but there were subtle indications that it was even more powerful than the other variants as its phasewater content was significantly higher.

As far as appearances went, the Larkinson Edition not only bore the golden emblem of the Larkinson Clan, but also came with red accents that added a touch of aggression to the design!

Ves did not have to present the Larkinson Edition to the public. The mech possessed additional advantages that were only exclusive to the strongest variant of the new mech line.

However, Ves kept the possibility of challenges in account.

If other mech companies chose to stand up and issued their challenges, then he wanted to make sure that he would still have his best and most combat capable Fey Fiannas on hand!

Of course, it would be better if Ves did not have to reveal their special traits in this public event. The aliens were clearly keeping an eye on human civilization, so it became more difficult to preserve the element of surprise.

After the Fey Fiannas left an unforgettable impression in people's minds, Ves began to explain their basic properties.

"The Fey Fianna is a new line of living mechs that is currently split up into three variants, of which two of them are available for sale or on commission. The Standard Edition is a premium hyper drone mech that is fairly light and mobile without its fey. The armor system of this edition is made out of a cost-efficient combination of alloys that incorporates water-attributed hypers for additional sturdiness and protection."

Tables filled with basic technical data came into view. Laymen had no clue of what the numbers meant, but the mech designers among the viewers all understood the essence of the defenses of the mechs at a glance.

Ves put Beatrice Hendrix in charge of designing the defenses of the Fey Fianna. Her design philosophy centered around Adaptive Modular Armor Systems, so the physical protection of the mech could be rearranged on the fly.

The Fey Fianna was not an ideal mech for recently recruited Journeyman Mech Designer. Beatrice was able to do much more with modular armor systems if there was a lot more mass and armor plates at her disposal.

When she was assigned to a mech design that only had room for relatively light and thin armor, she had little choice but to make the best out of a bad situation.

In order to limit the cost of the Fey Fianna, the mech did not feature a battle skirt like the Maiden of Adversity.

The drone mech featured very little redundant modular armor plates, so if any of them broke, the mech's internals became exposed.

There were several reasons why this wasn't as bad as it looked.

Ves flew closer to a Standard Fey Fianna and put his hand onto one of the small armor plates.

The modular nature of the machine was hardly obvious on the surface as Beatrice Hendrix did a good job at hiding the seams.

"The custom-developed modular armor system of the Fey Fianna is designed with a focus on efficiency and maximization of limited assets." He explained. "The rapid and precise redeployment of modular armor plating can effectively increase the damage tolerance of this mech without burdening it with excess mass that can slow it down. While the Fey Fianna is largely designed to rely on its superior mobility to avoid getting hit in the first place, light to moderate attacks will not easily be able to damage the internals so long as the modular armor system is given enough time to respond."

Ves slapped the surface of the mech, causing it to demonstrate this capacity on the spot.

A projected rifleman mech came into view. It raised its gauss rifle and fired a single powerful round at the Fey Fianna!

Bang!

The simulated attack struck the midsection of the Fey Fianna. The modular plates located over there fell out of the mech as if they truly shattered into pieces.

Before the rifleman mech could fire a second gauss round, the same quantity of modular armor plates detached from the rear of the Fey Fianna and quickly filled up the sensitive gap at the front!

Bang!

The same spectacle repeated again.

Bang!

And again.

Bang!

And again.

The repeated redeployments of the modular armor plating showed how fast and reliable they responded to a dangerous situation.

So far, the demonstration certainly highlighted the ability for the Fey Fianna to cover up its weak points, but many mechs equipped with modular armor systems could do the same.

This was why additional simulated enemy mechs came into existence. They all fired their weapons at the singled-out Fey Fianna, causing the mech to lose a lot more modular armor plates than before.

Yet no matter how its defenses got stressed, the adaptive modular armor plating all removed themselves from the limbs or from the rear that wasn't being threatened at the moment.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Modular armor plating fell down like drops of rain, yet more of them flew in order to close all of the newly formed gaps.

Of course, the Fey Fianna could not keep this up forever. Its nonessential limbs and rear section soon lost all of the modular armor plating that they could spare.

Once the drone mech received more hits at this junction, it could only reposition the modular plates at the front, which would just expose other critical weak points to the opposing mechs!

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Yet just as the armor coverage at the front of the torso became stripped, additional modular armor plates flew from other directions!

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

No matter how many times the enemy rifleman mechs fired their weapons, the Fey Fianna benefited from a seemingly limitless of spare modular armor plates, enabling it to weather attacks that was far in excess of what an ordinary mech was able to withstand in this situation!

Another rifleman mech appeared in view. This one was clearly more dangerous as it was armed with a much more dangerous transphasic energy rifle!

Just as it took aim and prepared to fire its much deadlier firearm, the vulnerable Fey Fianna adopted a much more different defensive arrangement.

A much greater quantity of plates appeared and stacked on top of each other, thereby creating a temporary multi-layered chest plate that happened to cover all of the essential internal components!

If that wasn't enough, the Fey Fianna also began to channel more water energy.

Since each modular armor plate contained a modest amount of water hyper materials, the ensemble gained a strange form of empowerment that gave off the illusion of a body of water.

BANG!

The simulated transphasic gauss round 'tore' through multiple modular armor plates in an instant, but lost more energy and penetration power as it went deeper.

The round finally stalled as the final layer of armor successfully bled the projectile of all of its forward momentum!

This was a more impressive display to the audience. The speed, precision and most importantly the prediction of the incoming trajectory of the Fey Fianna in response to such a dangerous threat could save actual lives on the battlefield!

Many mech pilots who only had the option of piloting mechs with traditional armor systems all grew jealous at the Fey Fianna.

For those who piloted machines with lighter armor, the ability to dynamically plug weak points could be a lifesaver in the right situations!

"This is but a brief demonstration of the dynamic defenses of the Fey Fianna." Ves remarked with a smile before gesturing at the surrounding mechs and fey. "As you can see, a mech under fire does not have to rely on the modular armor plates attached to its own frame for additional protection. When necessary, it can draw from the exact same type of armor plates from its own fey, thereby choosing to give up on protecting them in favor of saving what is truly important."

Ves gestured to the neighboring Fey Fiannas that had lost a portion of their modular armor plating.

"Although we do not recommend it, different Fey Fiannas can dynamically transfer modular armor plates to each other at short ranges. Secure protocols that require the permissions and active participation of both the mech pilots and the living mechs will ensure that this will not cause Fey Fiannas to get stripped of their protection for no reason. If you cannot trust the reliability of this sharing system, then you can deactivate this function on a hardware level. No one will be able to hijack your modular armor plates in that case."

This was not enough to reassure those who were paranoid about this sort of stuff. One of the reasons why modular armor systems weren't ubiquitous was because there was always the chance that they could get hacked or jammed to the point where they became useless.

Modular armor systems were also costlier and more fragile, but Ves had chosen to pair them with the Fey Fiannas anyway because the fit was too good.

With the ability to draw out modular armor plating from both the main body and the accompanying fey, the survivability of this new mech model should be considerably higher than the norm!

Chapter 5525 Stuffing A Straw

Ves continued to elaborate on the defensive features of the Fey Fianna. Its modular armor plating was fantastic and fared best when locked in a fight against small craft.

Unfortunately, all of this fancy tech that enabled rapid dynamic redeployment of modular armor plates served little purpose when struck by the gun batteries of a warship!

Any primary or secondary gun battery of a sizable alien vessel could blow the Fey Fianna to bits with ease!

This was why many mech pilots among the viewers still tempered their enthusiasm for this new drone mech.

This amount of armor meant little in the face of overwhelming firepower.

Of course, thicker and stronger armor did not necessarily mean that a mech could withstand the powerful attacks of a warship. Additional bulk might save the mech from getting torn apart by attacks launched by secondary or tertiary gun batteries, but it would ultimately slow down the machine to such an extent that it became a sitting duck!

That was why a lot of people understood the design choice that Ves had made for this machine. Emphasizing mobility over hard defenses granted the Fey Fiannas a considerably greater chance of surviving clashes against formidable alien warships.

Over 80 percent of the mech designers among the viewers would have made a similar choice as Ves if they were in his shoes. The remaining 20 percent probably intended to rely on gimmicks such as ECM systems or other special tech.

Armor was not completely useless, though. There were many hazards that could not be evaded and could only be resisted with hard defenses. Armor also helped a lot with allowing mechs to endure the attack runs of alien starfighters.

"As you can see, the armor system of the Fey Fianna is primarily based on the water attribute." Ves highlighted one of the more important quirks of his new mech. "I will elaborate more on this subject, but at a basic level, the use of the water element can work just as well as the metal element in strengthening the damage resisting capabilities of armor plating. The decision to base it around the water element is to reduce potential incompatibilities and allow it to maintain maximum effectiveness when employed alongside its energy shields, which are also enhanced by water energy."

The Fey Fianna was not a defensive mech and could not accommodate more than a small energy shield generator. It was not meant to repel a lot of attacks, but was merely there to prevent accidents and fatal blows.

In fact, the energy shield generator was rather underpowered compared to the needs of the new drone mech. Ves added it anyway because the inclusion of water hypers gave the mech the potential to amplify the performance of its energy shields beyond a reasonable level!

The more expensive editions of the Fey Fianna did not have to worry about this issue. Each of them were equipped with more effective azure shield generators.

While they were nowhere near as huge and exaggerated as the ones mounted on the dreadnoughts of the Red Fleet, the devices were more than capable of protecting the Fey Fianna from a lot of sustained firepower or a few powerful impacts from a transphasic weapon!

"In short, the defenses of the Fey Fianna are empowered by the water element, which means that it can resist physical attacks much more effectively so long as they are not infused by the power of the earth element. The energy shields are particularly effective at limiting the damage of energy attacks, especially when they are enhanced by the fire element. All of these relations may sound convoluted

to you, but the RA's internal database has a full list of synergistic and antagonistic relationships between different E energy attributes."

Talk about different elements sounded too abstruse to many people. Only those who possessed unusual backgrounds or had already gotten started in hyper technology understood the significance of this explanation.

To most mech pilots, all they had to know was that defenses enhanced by water were pretty effective at resisting fire attacks.

Physical attacks were pretty dicey as the ones empowered by the earth element could more easily overpower the Fey Fianna's defensive layers.

Of course, all of these relationships were relative to their power levels. A fire energy beam attack from a battleship could easily wipe out the Fey Fianna with ease regardless of what sort of fancy tricks it pulled!

Ves moved on to talk about the direct armaments of his new drone mechs.

"The Fey Fianna is primarily designed for ranged combat, but it is still able to defend itself in close combat as long as the mech pilot has the right skills. The Living Mech Corporation is ready to sell the Fey Fianna with a range of different weapon loadouts. Our recommendation is to equip the Fey Fianna with one of our newly developed fourth generation luminar crystal rifles and a backup knife."

He spent the next few minutes showcasing the power of the Fey Fianna's direct weapons.

They were not too remarkable aside from the fact that they were also hyper weapons. The luminar crystal rifle equipped with a powerful fire beam attack phase crystal could spit out fiery rays that were especially good at melting metal-reinforced defenses!

If not for the fact that the fire energy drawn by the weapon would interfere with the water-based defenses of the Fey Fianna, the rifle could have been good enough to serve as the main weapon system of this mech!

Though the performance of the fourth generation luminar crystal rifle was not outstanding, it did not lose out on many other weapons of the same type.

"The Fey Fianna is not a specialized rifleman mech, but it is able to attain higher accuracies when the living mech and the mech pilot have experienced enough growth and training. The light and compact luminar crystal rifle is excellent at producing sustained output without imposing too much of a burden on the machine. However, if you ever need more punch, you can swap its weapon for a heavier and more powerful rifle, though it is recommended that you upgrade the mech's energy reserves in order to sustain its energy consumption."

The Fey Fianna was a hungry mech model. The energy shield generator and the modular armor system all needed to be powered in order to be effective. The machine also had to power its flight system in order to make it agile enough to evade many attacks.

Ves did not spend any time on highlighting the Fey Fianna's melee combat capabilities as they were truly not worthwhile for him to draw attention to. They could only be described as barebones at best.

Perhaps Ves or another mech designer might design a melee-oriented variant of the Fey Fianna. That would allow it to synergize with other powerful features that were only effective at close range.

Once he addressed the weapon loadouts, Ves moved on to the most important elements of a drone mech.

Ves floated over to one of the luminar crystal cannon fey, which looked eager to introduce itself to the public.

Lucky followed suit and perched his body on top of the rounded surface of the fey.

Despite the fact that the fey was clearly lower in volume to a mech, Ves still looked relatively small in proportion!

The fey clearly leaned on the larger side of a spur.

Compared to the thin and elegant Sparrows of the Sparrow Storm, the fey looked like their fat, oversized cousins!

Yet their greater size did not look particularly bloated or ugly. Their size was exactly right for their purpose.

Although the fey were not as small and nimble as the Sparrows, their superior capacity enabled them to get away with a lot more stuff.

They were able to mount stronger weapons and resist significantly more damage.

There were also other important advantages to their higher volumes, a few of which happened to be highly relevant in the Age of Dawn.

While Ves methodically explained these differences, he projected two different simplified internal diagrams.

One of them depicted a dumbed down version of the internal layout of the luminar crystal cannon fey. He especially color-coded the sections in order to make it easier to understand to the technological illiterates.

The other diagram depicted a similar diagram of a spur that looked suspiciously close to a basic Sparrow.

It was easy to spot a lot of obvious differences. Mech designers could puzzle over them all day, but Ves had to keep it short.

"Spurs can come in all shapes and sizes. There is a collection of drone mechs that are always characterized by their small and slender spurs. Designed many generations ago, the properties of these spurs completely fit the needs of the market at the time. By equipping drone mechs with a large amount of small and disposable spurs, these machines can tear through lightly armored mechs with ease. Though vulnerable to area attacks and weak against better-armored units, these drone mechs occupy their niche so well that they have set a standard that has lasted for the remainder of the Age of Mechs."

Many insiders knew what Ves was referring to. For the Sparrow Storm line to consistently capture at least 30 percent of the galactic mech market over a span of many years, it had absolutely earned its place on the throne!

Yet Ves did not believe it was unassailable. The past was not the same as the present!

A part of his excitement faintly radiated through his glow, causing others to hang onto his words even more.

"The size of spurs has an important impact on their capabilities. Due to many reasons, smaller spurs have less disposable space inside of their metal shells, which have to be at least a certain thickness in order to be practical in combat. Just like straws that you can use to sip your beverages, there is not much space that you can use to squeeze in useful modules. Larger and more squarish spurs can contain a lot more modules in proportion."

This was clearly visible in the schematics. Every spur had to reserve internal space for all kinds of essential components such as armor, inertial dampeners, maneuvering thrusters, processor chips, energy cells and so on. While their volumes could all be adjusted according to the needs of the design, they could not be diminished too much, or else the spur would become useless.

Once all of the available capacity was filled up with 'essential' components that could not be removed no matter what, the amount of space left available for functional and optional parts was not that much.

This was why light mechs always had to struggle to squeeze in one additional energy cell while heavy mechs could easily stuff so many of them inside their frames that they could fire their energy weapons for hours on end.

Ves gestured at the two projected schematics. After sending a silent transmission, the spaces that were not essential lit up, making it obvious how much disposable internal volume they had at their disposal.

"As you can see, the differences in size and other factors make it so that the small and thin spurs that are commonly utilized by many drone mechs cannot accommodate as many hyper materials. Anyone who has studied hyper technology understands how debilitating that may be. The mechs have called this period the Hyper Generation for good reasons. How can any self-respecting mech skimp on hyper materials? These needle-like spurs are hardly superior to their previous versions, and the realspace performance metrics back up this conclusion!"

In other words, Ves basically castigated the Sparrow Storm Mark XII for being an ill-suited mech for the current age.

SKL Mech Industries had done an admirable job at figuring out hyper technology quickly and updating many of its mainstream mech lines with remarkable speed.

The customers who bought or upgraded to the Mark XII also got their money's worth. The immediate 20 to 30 percent or so performance boost enabled many second-class mech forces to reduce their losses and earn more decisive victories!

Yet Ves did not see a future in the Mark XII. Its legacy design choices had become counterproductive in the new age. Only larger spurs could accommodate more significant quantities of hyper materials, and the Fey Fianna was the first drone mech to field more properly sized spurs!

Chapter 5526 Transition Period

Though his previous explanation veered into the technical side, the use of two different diagrams provided a clear and intuitive visualization to many ordinary people.

These laymen clearly understood that if they had to choose between stuffing as many hyper materials as possible into a thick straw or a small lunchbox, they would always choose the latter!

Even though there were many more straws available than lunchboxes, the latter was simply a better choice. They naturally lent themselves to storing a lot more junk than usual.

This was the central design choice behind the fey of his new drone mech.

Unlike the highly competent design teams of SKL Mech Industries, Ves was not shackled to the past. He was free to choose any size of spur he liked because he was starting completely from scratch. This was how he could easily pick the most optimal dimensions for the current age and mech generation.

In contrast, the much more experienced and specialized mech designers always had to design their assigned sickle mechs with at least one hand tied behind their backs.

One of the enduring advantages and selling points of well-established mech companies such as SKL was that its product lines always remained somewhat consistent.

Its mech designers painstakingly needed to abide by design choices made twenty, fifty or even a hundred years ago!

Each time these old mainstream mech models had to be refreshed, the newer iterations had to resemble the older ones to a high degree.

The materials and parts had to be as identical as possible. The less changes made to the design, the cheaper it was to retool large-scale production lines and retain the value of old inventory of materials and loose components.

Fixed customers who utilized the previous versions of a mech line also appreciated the fact that much of the essential characteristics of an existing model remained the same.

The newly updated models only came with the most essential upgrades. Anything more was a waste of time, money and resources.

The changes had to be small enough for existing mech pilots to transition to the improved mechs while requiring only a minimal amount of retraining.

Yet they also had to be innovative enough to prevent the product lines from losing their competitiveness.

The mainstream mech models could not afford to fall behind too much!

While they were mainly attractive to mech buyers due to other factors, their technological sophistication had to be at least above average in their product categories in order to sustain their market leads.

Ves believed that the Sparrow Storm Mark XII fell short of this goal!

When he addressed this topic with Gavin in a past discussion, they both realized the amazing opportunity this represented.

"SKL Mech Industries is not in a good shape." Gavin spoke. "It is still a huge megacorporation, but losing complete contact with its headquarters in the old galaxy has disrupted many contracts, mech designers and other ongoing arrangements. The company executives and managers had to put out

the immediate fires first, and that has left them with scant little attention and resources to form more comprehensive product strategies. I seriously doubt that anyone in their Red Ocean headquarters put any serious thought into the future of the Sparrow Storm line."

Ves nodded in agreement. "The impact of losing access to a lot of fixed mech designers and design teams also should have hurt the company a lot. A whole bunch of excellent mech designers became unavailable. Many of them must have worked on the Sparrow Storm line for decades if not longer. All of their considerable institutional know-how has effectively become lost on this side of the greater beyond gate. The execs who are scrambling to restore the health of their lucrative megacorporation probably gathered whatever decent mech designers were on hand and commanded them to update their product lines in a hurry just to prove that SKL is still alive. It is not as if their design teams can do any better when the company is in such a mess."

Both Ves and Gavin grinned at each other. They both understood what this represented!

"If this is true, then the Sparrow Storm Mark XII was never meant to be their 'proper' version of a hyper mech at all." Gavin avidly concluded. "It is a stopgap model. It is made to serve as a bridge between the old Phasewater Generation and the promising new Hyper Generation. It was never meant to last more than 5 or 10 years. Once SKL has completed its reorganization and rebuilt its entire supply chain and value chain, that is when the megacorporation is in a position to design a 'proper' iteration of the Sparrow Storm."

Ves added another important development to the story.

"With the early release of a new version of the Sparrow Storm, SKL is under much less pressure to update all of its product lines so soon. The Mark XII barely meets the standards of a hyper mech, but it can still legitimately be regarded as one. In that sense, it is hardly any different from all of the other early models released in the first months of the Age of Dawn. I think that the execs at SKL likely assume that this move has satisfied the immediate needs of their existing customer base. This allows them to allocate its highly competent mech designers to other, more important product lines."

The mention of multiple product lines reminded Gavin of how many SKL had actually published over the years.

Discounting all of the variants, one-off models and lagging sellers, the megacorporation maintained hundreds of lines, of which a quarter of them had become market leaders and earned an insane amount of revenue as a result!

"The true pillars of SKL are far more important than a relatively niche second-class drone mech." Gavin noted in a solemn tone. "I have studied the releases of this company. They have released a lot of superficial updates to their existing mech lines. In order to prevent them from being stained by the label of a lastgen mech, they have to incorporate at least a small amount of hyper materials in order to keep up with the latest trend. In fact, I think that the company's mech designers are being worked to the bone in order to complete the hasty refresh of its remaining mech lines. There are just too many of them. Just the need to refresh the most popular variants alone is enough to occupy their work for years."

Ves accessed the galactic net and studied the list of mechs that SKL and its many subsidiary companies had released during the first year of the Age of Dawn.

His assistant made a good observation. The huge mech company may have enjoyed a huge advantage in the past, but these legacies also weighed it down.

Both Ves and Gavin confirmed that there was an opening that they could use to overtake SKL!

"There is a delay of at least several years between the release of the Sparrow Storm Mark XII and its more fully fleshed out Mark XIII version that will be out in a few years." Ves surmised. "The former is too inadequate and the latter will take too long to get released. It takes a lot of time for mech designers and other developers to figure out the finer applications of hyper technology."

"There is also another factor that may cause SKL to delay the release of the next version of this line and other lines. All of those early adopters and fixed customers paid good money in order to update their Mark Xi's into Mark XII's. Each of these high-priced clients are important to SKL. They are not only fantastic sources of revenue, but also bestow a lot of credibility to the mech company. SKL absolutely cannot afford to piss off its most loyal and strategic customers by releasing another revision a short time later."

It was like buying a shiny new comm model, only for the company to release a much more powerful one just 6 months later!

How would existing customers feel when they had bought an inferior model because they had been too impatient?

Even if these groups were fairly rich and powerful, that did not necessarily mean they preferred to get ripped off! There was no way that mech buyers would hold much affection for a mech company that utilized exploitative moves to treat them as money dispensers!

"What I have noticed from SKL is that they always value stability and long-term interests over immediate results." Gavin told his boss. "That works fine in a period of relative peace and stability, but it leaves a company too slow and cumbersome to respond to crises that have unfolded during unexpected periods of time. It goes straight against their existing policies to refresh its mech lines so soon."

SKL might make an exception due to the abnormal circumstances of the times, but the chance of that happening was low.

Besides, even if SKL wanted to accelerate the design and release of proper hyper mechs, it would definitely start with the top earning cash cows!

Popular models such as rifleman mechs, light skirmishers, swordsmen mechs and knight mechs were responsible for the majority of the earnings of the mech company!

A second-class drone mech such as the Sparrow Storm line might have captured a hefty market share, but only in a relatively small product category.

There was no way that SKL would put a high priority in updating it to the current era!

All of this meant that the LMC could take advantage of this transition period to release their own version of an excellent drone mech!

Gavin analyzed the conditions and estimated whether it could work.

"You may actually be able to succeed in taking over much of the market share that is currently in the hands of SKL. The start of the Age of Dawn has reset every piece of existing technology that

currently exists. Every mech company has to start anew, at least when it comes to the new technologies that have become available. We have entered into a crucial period now. While the big old lumbering SKL is still stuck in trying to executive its enormous strategic shift, our LMC can slip in and capture the market for one of the minor fiefs that it previously did not prioritize!"

Several conditions had to be true at the same time.

Aside from the aforementioned ones, the targets also had to be right. The attention of the LMC had to be set on one of the secondary mainstream mech models. Their move would probably backfire if they miscalculated!"

Clearly, Ves had decided to take this gamble.

He believed he had earned the qualifications to do so. The Fey Fianna had definitely become good enough to fill this crucial gap, and Ves was confident enough that his rapidly rising reputation should be sufficient enough to counteract the existing reputation of SKL!

This fateful position had led him to this point. Now, he could feel so much attention swinging in his direction.

"There are no other drone mechs like our Fey Fianna on the market." Ves confidently boasted to his massive audience. "The use of large-sized spurs is rare, though it is admittedly growing. Yet among all of the mech designs that feature spurs of larger stature, none of them carry the distinct and unique advantages of living mechs. Each of these fey are alive, but what does that truly mean? It means that they can possess their own personality and quirks, which carry on even if the physical fey are destroyed and replaced."

As Ves continued to extol the virtues of the Fey Fianna, he believed that the executives and mech designers of SKL may have definitely drawn their attention to his product reveal.

So what?

It was far too late for them to think about issuing a response! Unless they had a superior version of the Sparrow Storm ready to go, there was no way they could interrupt the momentum of the LMC!

Chapter 5527 The Superiority of Living Fey

It was difficult for Ves to explain the full magnitude of what it meant to make the fey alive.

He tried the best he could, but he was afraid that most people wouldn't understand the full implications until his customers started to talk about it in their own words.

He tried to do his best as he wanted his customers to have as few surprises as possible when they purchased his products.

Ves gestured towards the different fey types that he had designed for his Fey Fianna.

"Each individual Fey Fianna mech is alive. At the same time, it is home to four subordinate lives that can act as the lives inside a fey. The metal spurs are not alive by themselves, but they are akin to empty living shells that can easily be taken over by one of the subordinate lives of a Fey Fianna. There are many advantages to this arrangement. If any of the fey are ever destroyed in battle, then the living entity that used to occupy it can return to the main body. Once a new fey is assigned to the Fey Fianna, that existing living entity can enter a new body and resume its growth!"

All of this sounded far too complicated and convoluted when conveyed through words alone, but that was why Ves accompanied his words with a visual presentation.

He could feel that many of his viewers did not actually remain confused in the end. It became clear enough how the living fey were supposed to work in this context.

The hardware was disposable, but the lives contained within were priceless!

One of the most crucial design solutions behind this seamless puppetry and fey takeover process was that it actually borrowed from Gloriana's second skin approach!

Gloriana's second skin living mechs primarily centered around allowing human mech pilots to embody living mechs to a much deeper extent than usual.

The current implementation in the Fey Fianna design was to treat the subordinate spirits as 'pilots' of their own fey!

It was an ingenious arrangement that largely reduced the pain from losing a lot of fey. The loss of all of that hardware would definitely be costly to replace, but the true heritage and accumulation of the Fey Fianna remained completely intact!

"Each of the four living fey of every mech is precious and valuable." Ves affectionately said as he caressed the different fey as if they were welcoming pets. "The pain of losing them may not be evident at the start, but as long as you continue to invest in the growth of the Fey Fianna, they become increasingly more powerful and irreplaceable. Just as how veteran mech pilots can easily defeat multiple rookies in most fights, a Fey Fianna with living fey that have evolved for many years simply cannot be bought in any of our stores."

He smirked as he made use of various projections to show how older Fey Fiannas could become increasingly more powerful while fearlessly sacrificing their fey whenever it was necessary to complete their missions.

The spurs of a drone mech had to retain their disposable property in order to remain useful!

If a Fey Fianna could not afford to lose any of its fey for fear of killing off the crucial living entities, then no mech pilot would dare to take any risks.

This defeated the purpose of a drone mech!

"The addition of multiple living entities anchored to a single living mech frame is one of the latest refinements of my living mechs." Ves emphasized his vital contribution to this impressive arrangement. "Designing mechs that are alive and can evolve by themselves is too simple for a more complicated model such as the Fey Fianna. Only the attachments of multiple subordinate lives can make this drone mech gain so much potential. Each living fey can not only be restored without being too picky with their physical bodies, but they are all able to learn and develop their unique techniques!"

There were still a few downsides and limitations related to the possibility of transferring the subordinate spirits from one physical shell to another.

A living entity that spent years mastering the capabilities of a fire beam luminar crystal cannon fey would have to learn a lot of tricks from scratch if it was transferred to a water space suppressor fey!

Perhaps the living entity was unable to make this transition at all due to the inability to master additional E energy attributes.

Ves was unable to tell what would happen if such a scenario took place. It was fine if the living entities weren't too adaptable. There were always possibilities for the Fey Fianna to spawn additional subordinate spirits!

"Unlike many other drone mech models on the market, our Fey Fianna is optimized to fight with four fey at the start. This is the optimal number that we have settled upon after exploring multiple alternatives. Four living fey does not sound like much, but when each of them can become powerful on their own, you will learn to respect their strength and abilities just like how we treat our own human heroes."

The implication here was that every subordinate spirit had the capability to grow and break through just like human mech pilots!

Such a complicated and powerful arrangement sounded impossible to many people, but Ves somehow made it clear that he had succeeded in bringing it to life through his presentation!

A lot of leaders and mech designers who had attempted to imitate living mechs each understood how far ahead Ves had gotten.

"The small field of living mechs has advanced by a considerable extent. If Professor Larkinson's claims about the potential of these 'subordinate spirits' are true, then he has developed a design application that will take many years for our new specialists to master, if that is possible at all. By then, it is likely that he has already leapt ahead and developed another major improvement to his living mech systems."

This was the annoying part about falling behind in a new and exciting field. Living mechs existed long enough now to spawn a lot of initiatives aimed at replicating them with their own personnel.

The Terrans actually enjoyed a head start in this as Ves freely shared his knowledge in the courses he taught at the Eden Institute.

Even so, it was a bit difficult to expect mech design students who have yet to complete their programs to design living mechs on the spot!

Sooner or later, the monopoly on living mechs would break, and Ves would no longer be as lonely as before.

There was no reason at all for him to feel concerned about this. The successful development of multi-spirit mechs was such a major advancement that his living mechs would assuredly remain the leader in this aspect!

Over and over, Ves emphasized the fact that the subordinate spirits could not only maintain their lives so long as the main body of the Fey Fianna did not get destroyed, but also grow and develop as if they were actual human qi cultivators!

It was a bit difficult to make his audience realize the significance of that last part through explanations alone.

The upcoming demonstrations and exhibition matches were crucial to making his audience understand how important it was to the total package!

Ves smiled as he floated among the living fey. After explaining what they shared in common, he began to explain the individual strengths of each fey type.

"So far, our LMC has only developed a handful of distinct fey types, but more will be developed in the future based on market demand and technological breakthroughs. Every fey model serves its own purpose. There are currently two offensive fey models that you can choose from, and their selection will have many implications for the Fey Fianna that make use of these killer machines."

Ves flew next to a fire beam luminar crystal cannon fey and patted his palm against its surface.

"The most convenient offensive fey at our disposal is this particular one. Armed with a fourth generation luminar crystal cannon, it can fire persistent hyper energy beams. It is especially powerful if it is able to output fire-attributed laser beams at different targets. Once this fey gets going, it can burn enemy targets with the power of fire and heat with firepower that is roughly equivalent to that of a complete ranged mech, especially if it has evolved for a time!"

This was a new concept that Ves constantly had to remind his audience. He had to make it clear to everyone that the hard performance of his living mechs were no longer as static as before.

The reality-distorting properties of E energy make it possible to empower the hardware of any living mech or fey. This could lead to a substantial amplification in the future!

The troublesome part about this was that it all took time. The experiences of every living mech was unique, so their growth trajectory was not uniform at all. Every living mech became defined by their individual journeys. They were no different than human cultivators in this regard.

Ves commanded one of the Standard Fey Fianna to become more active.

To be more specific, he asked the mech pilot to activate the hyper tech on all of the hardware at his disposal.

Multiple energy vortices came to life. The main body of the Fey Fianna began to absorb copious quantities of water energy. The different fey all started to absorb their own associated E energy attributes.

"As many mech pilots have gradually come to know, the performance of hyper mechs can fluctuate when they start to harness the power of multiple E energy attributes at once. This is most dangerous and difficult to separate with single mechs, but drone mechs such as my Fey Fianna are different. As you can see, as long as the fey keep their distance from any other conflicting unit, they can draw power from E energy radiation with fewer scruples!"

The fey only had to remain far enough from the main body in order for a water-based mech to make optimal use of its fire hyper materials!

All of this and more made the fire luminar crystal cannon fey into an attractive choice. It was efficient, longer lasting and not as heavy and bulky as the other offensive fey!

Ves slapped the side of the earth gauss cannon fey. "This is a considerably different beast than the previous fey model. It is larger, slower and heavier. The gauss cannon that can be equipped by this fey is integrated with earth hyper materials. This is an excellent combination as the living fey can continually learn how to apply the power of earth in each subsequent attack. The more it is put to use, the more the living fey will figure out better ways to empower its attacks. It is much like an

expert pilot in this regard, though it mainly relies on E energy rather than true resonance to amplify its performance!"

His words gave mech pilots the hope of wielding power that was comparable to an expert pilot without breaking through themselves!

How could they not feel tempted by this possibility? This alone was enough to earn the support of a lot of eager mech pilots!

The aliens became more dangerous every day. Their quantity could crush the forces of red humanity and the major races often enjoyed a crushing advantage against second-class mech forces.

More and more mech forces learned that they needed all of the power they could get, and if they were unable to add any expert mechs to their mech roster, then buying a lot of living mechs should yield much better results!

What pained these mech pilots was that the LMC was too damn slow. Its first true living mech model of the Hyper Generation was a drone mech rather than any of the staple mech types!

How long would it take for the LMC to release other hyper mechs?!

Chapter 5528 A Meeting at Bridgehead One

In a location far away from the Bortele System, Bridgehead One had become a hive of activity.

The star system had always seen a lot of traffic, but experienced a sharp decline after its greater beyonder gate turned into a useless metal ring.

Now, one year after the Age of Dawn, the first port of arrival of many red humans flourished yet again.

Its distance from alien space along with the huge reconstruction effort of the greater beyonder gate turned it into the most important stronghold of red humanity!

This was the final bulwark of humanity in the Red Ocean. If Bridgehead One ever fell, then it was likely that the remaining human survivors could only scatter in the darkest corners of the dwarf galaxy in order to preserve their fragile lives.

As the unofficial capital of their greater society, Bridgehead One easily broke the record for hosting the most humans and possessing the largest amount of fortifications.

Many warfleets regularly patrolled the neighboring star systems. Each of them were on the lookout for any sneaky alien phase whales or warships that sought to infiltrate the central nexus of human space.

Extremely advanced detection devices that exceeded the size of space stations constantly expended a massive amount of energy to detect every single manifestation of space warping and FTL travel.

Based on the ingenuity of multiple Star Designers, these masterwork megasensor arrays exceeded the level that ordinary human scientists and engineers could develop on their own. It would probably take centuries of deliberate R&D in order for ordinary humans to develop anything comparable, and even then they would still be marked by shortcomings.

It could easily be argued that the megasensor arrays may be the most powerful and advanced sensor systems in the new frontier!

Supremely powerful processors rapidly analyzed every scrap of data, flagging anything suspicious up the chain until multiple human experts could form a conclusion.

Not even a voribug egg or an interstellar fly could sneak into Bridgehead One without anyone's notice!

Deep inside a secret base, an advanced and extremely well-equipped complex of research labs and industrial workshops was being put to use day and night.

What was remarkable was that there was hardly any noise. The pristine white chambers all looked cold and sterile as many different first-class instruments worked by themselves.

Bots, mechanical arms and antigrav manipulators handled all sorts of objects and control panels. They were so good at their jobs that they completely replaced the role of humans!

While it was true that many of these devices were at least partially governed by AIs, the truth was that these machines were all controlled by a single person from a remote.

Yes, a single person!

To call her a human was stretching it, though. She may possess the guise of a sharp and clever human female, but the Polymath had surpassed this humble form many years ago! Her true form was far greater and more abstract than most people thought!

As a Star Designer who boasted one of the brilliant minds that humanity had ever spawned, the Polymath could genuinely be regarded as a job.

Therefore, it was trivially easy for her to take control over an entire R&D complex. Just her supremely powerful mind alone was enough to do the work of thousands of different researchers and Master Mech Designers!

In fact, the Polymath had a lot of spare thinking capacity left. She did not let this powerful resource go to waste.

A part of her split attention accessed a huge amount of data feeds at the same time and constantly fed the Star Designer with new information.

Another part of herself conducted highly realistic thought experiments within the confines of her god-like mind.

From designing complete mechs within seconds to modeling the entire progression of the Red War in the next 20 years, the Polymath would have overheated to the point of immolating herself a long time ago if she was still constrained by human limitations!

Alas, as productive as the Polymath appeared to be, she could do so much more if she still retained her old status and rights.

She could not help but think about all of the additional inventions she could make if she was allowed to return to her old labs or visit other research bases.

Instead, she remained stuck inside this limited base. An esteemed Star Designer that almost every human eagerly wanted to please in the past had become a pariah in the Red Association and beyond!

Though the Red Two never made any comments about the change in the Polymath's status, the upper echelon of red humanity knew that it was best if they did not maintain their old relations with her for the time being.

All of this limited the Polymath's capacity to conduct research and develop new tech even further.

Every shipment of materials, tech and other goods had to be vetted by an entire department of mechers!

With the known and estimated capabilities of the Polymath, it was not outlandish to assume that she could construct a super-teleporter and forcefully move hundreds of light-years away in an instant despite being subjected to extreme space suppression.

Even then, few people let their guard down when it came to the most controversial Star Designer in the Red Ocean.

It was almost impossible for mortals to restrain the actions of a True God.

The difference in power and other capabilities were so enormous that many of the security officers and inspectors that occupied this base believed that they could do nothing to stop the Polymath from breaking the rules!

Only another True God could restrain such a legendary figure and encourage her to remain honest.

It became customary for a Star Designer or a god pilot to frequently drop by this secret base and check up on the Polymath's work.

On this particular day, a special visitor had come to keep the female Star Designer company for a few hours.

Both of their human forms sat on a couch and watched a live feed that was remarkably more detailed and realistic than what a general broadcast could ever hope to match in the foreseeable time!

The live feed just happened to depict Ves as he eagerly introduced the features of his latest commercial work.

"That cheeky brat has opened up Pandora's box." The woman garbed in a deceptively simple lab coat spoke. "He could have developed his living mechs in relative peace so long as he continued to present his work in his usual fashion. Now that he has equated his living mechs to cultivators, many more mech designers will seek to specialize in living mechs in any way they can manage. If he isn't careful enough, he will find that he is no longer the sole authority on this matter. What do you think, my friend?"

The god pilot sitting in a ramrod straight posture on another couch closed his eyes for a time.

Once he opened them, he struggled to hold back the huge amount of rage and power that continually threatened to escape his control and destroy the entire base in a destructive outburst of power!

There was always a price to power. The Fist of Defiance was famed for being able to unleash strength that was far beyond his level and fight against a multitude of equally strong opponents at the same time!

This had led to the belief that the Fist of Defiance was unbeatable in direct combat. He could win any duel as a stronger opponent only provoked a stronger response from the famous combat maniac.

In a battle where he was outnumbered by his opponents, his fighting spirit would explode so much that the god pilot turned into a beast that could hold back a multitude of ancient phase whales!

Where did all of that energy come from? Only his extreme rage and other aggressive impulses could sustain such outbursts!

The god pilot was a genius for turning his own powerful mood swings into an energy source that could empower him to a height that was difficult to attain through other means!

Of course, the violent emotions of a god pilot was nothing to joke about. Every aspect of a True God was stronger or better in any way. A simple temper tantrum could easily wipe out half a planet if the Fist of Defiance ever lost control!

The god pilot could not let that happen. He continually exerted his extremely potent willpower to suppress his perpetually rebellious emotions.

This also had the benefit of polishing and refining his willpower, which would ultimately help him strengthen his god kingdom and make him more powerful.

It took a bit of time for the Fist of Defiance to regain a semblance of his humanity.

This happened to be a fairly bad day, so the man still exuded a strong sense of oppression that could not be contained.

"WE NEED MORE MECH DESIGNERS LIKE HIM. HE HAS MORE GUTS THAN ALL OF THE COWARDS IN BRIDGEHEAD ONE COMBINED. THIS NEW DRONE MECH MODEL LOOKS INTERESTING. THEY LOOK LIKE BLANK SLATES THAT CAN LEARN ANYTHING. I WONDER IF I CAN TRAIN THEM TO FIGHT LIKE MYSELF."

The Polymath shook her head in disapproval. "Living mechs are not entirely reliable. The more intelligent they become, the more they question the point of working with humans. The stronger they become, the greater the probability they will show contempt towards our race. My calculations predict that there is a 87.343 percent chance that red humanity and living mechs will suffer a breakdown in their relationship. The release of living mechs that contain multiple different personalities such as the Fey Fianna has increased this probability by 16.82 percent alone."

Although the Polymath had been stripped of much of her power, her intelligence and formidable calculation ability were still as good as ever!

As a beacon of Truth, there was no way that the Polymath would fudge her calculations. Such an act was anathema to her very own creed and existence!

As a pilot who had effectively fused with his god mech, the Fist of Defiance was not as stupid as he looked.

That did not mean that he had lost any of his old habits.

"WE WILL CLEAN UP THESE LIVING MECHS ONCE THEY BECOME A PROBLEM. UNTIL THEN, WE CAN LEAVE THE BRAT TO HIS OWN DEVICES. THE REALITY OF OUR DIRE SITUATIONS DOES NOT GRANT US THE LUXURY TO TURN AWAY THE POWER OF LIVING MECHS."

"We have made too many compromises in the last year." The Polymath remarked as she continued to watch the broadcast while working on thousands of other processes. "The lack of enforcement has emboldened too many groups. They have all become more unscrupulous about employing dangerous cultivation techniques and developing dangerous means to exploit E energy. Are you truly willing to let our Association stand by while these space peasants play with fire?"

"CHILDREN ARMED WITH FIRE AT LEAST HAVE A CHANCE OF DEFEATING HOSTILE ADULTS." The Fist of Defiance gruffly replied. "IN THIS NEW REALITY, WE HAVE ALL BEEN REDUCED TO CHILDREN. WE CANNOT GROW UP INTO ADULTS AGAIN WHO CAN TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN AFFAIRS IF WE DO NOT BECOME STRONG ENOUGH TO LIVE PAST TOMORROW."

A moment of silence fell in the enormous lounge as the two powerhouses engaged in their own thinking.

The god pilot who had succeeded in reshaping red humanity eventually made another inquiry.

"WHAT IS YOUR PROGRESS IN CONVERTING THE GREATER BEYOND GATE?"

"We are proceeding faster than we anticipated. The greater beyonder gate remains fiendishly difficult to decipher and transform. What is different is that my ability to solve many of the problems that have delayed me in the past has improved. E energy radiation is fascinating, and contains a depth of information that is nearly impossible to attain through other means."

"HOW SOON?"

"Two years at the latest, barring any sabotage or hostile attacks."

"THAT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY, NOT YOURS."

"Your tone betrays your desire to fight against the ancient phase whales once again." The clever Star Designer quickly discerned. "Do not use the greater beyonder gate as bait. I have little doubt in your ability to suppress hostile intruders, but I am less confident you can keep the gate unharmed."

"THE GATE SHALL NOT INCUR ANY DAMAGE. YOU HAVE MY PROMISE. IT IS THE VITAL ENGINE THAT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR REVITALIZING OUR RACE."

Chapter 5529 Fisting Addict

The status of the Fist of Defiance and the Polymath couldn't be more different.

One was a powerful god pilot who possessed such domineering will that it had become the primary force that sustained his existence.

The other was a Star Designer who was not only known as a prolific inventor, but also happened to be a failed tyrant whose attempted coup d'etat had left her in disgrace.

Philosophically, they were even further apart. Even if they were both members of the Survivalist Faction, they believed in very different solutions to save red humanity from getting overrun and wiped out from existence.

It was difficult for anyone to discern the Polymath's true motives and intentions at this time. This hyper-intelligent Star Designer shouldn't have been a person who was prone to madness and megalomania, but she surprised everyone during the Survivalist conference.

Still, the fact that she was still aligned with red humanity and plainly acknowledged her defeat meant that she did not receive any heavy punishment.

Certainly, the loss of reputation and the complete breakdown of her expansive network was a blow to her power and influence, but a Star Designer was force onto itself.

Perhaps lesser mortals still needed to rely on lots of alliances and mutual interests in order to get stuff done, but True Gods like the Polymath no longer needed such unnecessary entanglements!

The Fist of Defiance even suspected that the Polymath deliberately accounted for this outcome just so that she could make a clean break with her past burdens and relationships.

No matter what, the Fist of Defiance never fully trusted the Polymath from beginning to end.

Every Star Designer tended to disgust him a bit. They were way too clever and scheming by nature. The vast majority of them had never seen a lick of true combat in their life. Everything they knew about warfare was through second-hand information and the occasional human-to-human brain interface nonsense.

It was a pity that their relationship had deteriorated to this point. The Fist of Defiance previously respected the Polymath for becoming a rising pillar of the Survivalist Faction.

Alas, her ego and her overreliance on data turned her into a creature that did more harm than good, at least as far as he was concerned.

Was he any better, though?

The Fist of Defiance had no doubts about his beliefs, policies and convictions. Nobody became a god pilot while still having questions about himself. He was even more stubborn about pursuing his goals to the end than a Star Designer like the Polymath!

Yet that did not mean that he lacked self-awareness. He was more than cognizant of what kind of person he had turned into. Several centuries of fighting and training had allowed him to comprehend his psyche on a deeper level.

The Fist of Defiance was a god pilot who preferred to solve problems with his fists rather than his brain.

Both literally and figuratively, he always tried to forge ahead by applying the most direct application of force as possible.

The passing of his seemingly idiotic Deep Strike Plan was just the latest in his long line of bull-headed accomplishments!

Since red humanity united around his vision, his status changed considerably.

People already looked up to him for obvious reasons, but ever since he returned to human-occupied space, the folk practically revered the architect of the Deep Strike Plan!

So many common folk regarded the Fist of Defiance as the father of red humanity that the god pilot had no choice but to accept the responsibility that came with this title.

Even if the Survivalist Faction along with every major human bloc explicitly rejected the drive towards centralization as proposed by the Polymath, the current status of the Fist of Defiance exceeded that of any other god pilot or Star Designer.

His words had ten times the amount of political weight than before.

He could no longer indulge himself and take action without thinking it through.

A fast-growing political movement began to form across human-occupied space that espoused his ideals!

All of these new burdens did not cause the Fist of Defiance to regret the actions that led to this outcome.

God pilots never regretted their choices.

What he did find troubling was how to proceed from here. Nobody wanted him to become a tyrant or a monarch of red humanity, the Fist himself included.

Yet his intuition and his foresight vaguely hinted that even if he did nothing else, there was a chance that red humanity would slide in this direction.

Was it right for him to become the leader of a race that had never responded well to total unification in the past?

The man felt repulsed by the very thought of becoming the figurehead of his race and civilization.

Perhaps that sounded like a dream come true to control freaks like the Polymath. They would kill to be in his shoes!

Yet the Fist of Defiance would gladly trade places with another leader so that he could go back to bashing alien skulls and cracking open alien warships like eggs-

The rage and aggression building up inside his heart could not be contained without limit.

These destructive forces constantly tempered his willpower, but there was a limit to how much it could improve.

He did not belong in Bridgehead One.

Instead of babysitting the Polymath and guarding the greater beyond gate, the Fist of Defiance yearned to go back to the frontlines so that he could fist more phase whales!

If only those alien whales weren't so damn good at hiding inside their secret pocket spaces.

Even a powerful god pilot could not track them down without any solid clues of where their pocket spaces were located.

God pilots could only rely on the power of their organizations to gather these clues and find a trace of those powerful whales.

Of course, there were plenty of other enemies they could fight. One of the reasons why the frontlines remained so stable despite the increase in alien incursions was because the god pilots had already begun to clear out the alien menace whenever a problem region was reaching its limit!

Though it was rare to find any worthwhile opponents in these cleanup operations, it was better than nothing.

He needed to vent his desire for battle and fist as many aliens as possible!

If that was not possible, then he needed to have a good brawl with one of his fellow god pilots.

Venting his aggression and his lust for battle against another god pilot was always a good way to enjoy a hearty battle!

Even though a lot of his peers hated to fight against a persistent and unstoppable adversary like himself, both sides usually harvested many gains from a serious spar.

"You are departing soon."

"WITHIN A MONTH, WHICH IS SEVERAL WEEKS TOO MUCH. MY PATIENCE IS ALREADY WEARING THIN."

"Everyone knows who you are. They will not neglect this manner. The last thing that they want to see is for you to lose control and go berserk in the most important star systems in human-occupied space."

The Fist of Defiance grimaced. The few times he had lost control were... not pleasant.

From the moment he embarked on this path, he always had to improve fast enough to contain the beast that was growing from within.

The pressure eased up once he advanced to a god pilot, but he did not utilize his newfound strength to crush the beast when he had the chance.

The Fist of Defiance had instead chosen to preserve it and nurture it so that it could grow strong enough to exert the same effect on him as before!

"Has your control over your inner beast deteriorated?" The Polymath pointedly asked as she observed the god pilot with her insightful eyes.

"THE BEAST IS ALWAYS TRYING TO PRY OUT OF ITS CAGE. EVERYTHING ELSE IS NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS."

"Everything has an ending, my friend. You cannot sustain this forever. I can foresee only two possible outcomes. You will either crush the beast and gain the peace that has been denied to you, or you will become vanquished by it, allowing it to break free and spread terror across the stars. How many admirers of yours will still be able to regard you as their hero if they know that you are containing a terrible beast?"

The Fist of Defiance shrugged in a deliberately nonchalant manner.

"THEIR OPINIONS ARE WORTHLESS TO ME. I AM ONLY CONCERNED AT HOW QUICKLY I CAN GET BACK TO DRIVING MY FISTS INTO POWERFUL ALIEN ADVERSARIES."

"Typical." The Polymath contemptuously spoke. "Of all of the leader figures that red humanity has chosen to idolize, it has to be the most crude and battle-hungry among us. I still find it difficult to accept that your Deep Strike Plan received the most votes at the time. The Diplomacy Plan was the logical fallback choice. If not for the endorsement of this cheeky brat, your simplistic and excessively risky plan would never have become so widely adopted."

The Fist of Defiance found amusement in her complaints. He crossed his arms and looked at her with a smug expression.

"I WON ANYWAY. THE PROCESS IS NOT AS IMPORTANT AS THE OUTCOME. I TRULY HAVE TO SHOW MY GRATITUDE TOWARDS THE CHEEKY BRAT FOR DOING WHAT

WAS RIGHT FOR ALL OF US. WITH REGARDS TO MY PLAN, I KEPT IT SIMPLE ENOUGH THAT OTHERS CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN WITHOUT ANY FURTHER INVOLVEMENT FROM ME. I NEVER ASKED TO SIT ON A THRONE, UNLIKE YOU. I AM ONLY HAPPY WHEN I AM CLOSE TO AN ENEMY THAT I AM ALLOWED TO PUNCH. EVEN IF EVERY STATE AGREES TO GIVE ME A CROWN, I WILL ONLY CRUSH IT WITH MY HANDS BEFORE TOSSING THE BROKEN LUMP OF METAL AWAY."

It was so infuriating for the Polymath to talk with a brainless neanderthal like the Fist of Defiance!

She knew that he was deliberately talking about how he did not want to rule over red humanity just to rub it in her face that she had failed to secure this right herself!

While she was fully capable of suppressing her frustrations, the Polymath had learned her lesson. Letting her rationality monopolize her decision-making process was just asking for trouble in an imperfect society.

She needed to refamiliarize herself with her humanity if she wanted to navigate society in the future.

"Are you not curious at all why we have decided to pass on my old crown to the cheeky brat?"

"NO."

"That is a lie."

"LET ME ELABORATE. I AM CURIOUS, BUT I DO NOT THINK IT IS WORTH MY TIME TO INVESTIGATE FURTHER. WHAT CAN A CROWN DO IN THE FACE OF THE POWER OF MY FIST? IF THAT IS NOT ENOUGH TO SOLVE A PROBLEM, THEN I CAN ALWAYS UNLEASH THE BEAST ON MY OWN ACCORD. I MAY NOT BE ABLE TO RETURN ONCE I DO SO, BUT I CAN GUARANTEE YOU THAT ANYONE IN FRONT OF ME WILL RECEIVE THE SAME ENDING."

If the Polymath was not a powerful transcendent, she would have shuddered at the mention of this threat.

One of the reasons why very few open dissenters had emerged since the Deep Strike Plan went into effect was because no one wanted to provoke the unreasonable and violent god pilot who proposed it in the first place!

Though the Fist of Defiance had matured quite a bit since his wilder days, he could never get rid of his reputation as a troublemaker.

There was a period in the past where he looked for every possible excuse to have a good fight!

He provoked the Terrans, the Rubarthans, his fellow mechers and random aliens just to satisfy his craving for a beating!

Ironically, it was this exact notoriety that accidentally turned the Fist of Defiance in the greater force of unity within red humanity.

Every major group and faction had plenty of reasons to fight against each other, but they all happened to form a total consensus on a single matter.

Never give the Fist of Defiance a reason to come and bash his fist in your face!

Chapter 5530 Wave Pressure

Unknowing of the esteemed audience that he had managed to attract back in Bridgehead One, Ves continued to present the defining strengths and features of his latest commercial mech model.

Millions of people inside Phoca Arena became completely enraptured by his elaborate explanation.

Those who watched the product reveal in the comfort of their own homes or workplaces also became fascinated by the range of features or the depth of complexity by what should really be a simple drone mech.

Though Ves veered into his professor mode at times, few people complained about his lecturing. He knew his audience well and kept everything simple in order to avoid flooding people's ears with numbers and mathematical formulas.

Of course, Ves did not want to give rival mech designers any freebies if he could help it. Just because he did not mind it if others started to figure out how to design living mechs on their own did not mean he wanted to give away all of his trade secrets!

He had worked hard to develop his multi-spirit living mechs. He studied a lot of obscure and confusing cultivation texts. He conducted a lot of tedious and repetitive spiritual experiments in order to figure out brand-new mechanisms. He squeezed his ingenuity to the limit to solve various problems that limited the practicality of the Fey Fianna.

All of that work and effort paid off in spades. The Fey Fianna was not a simple multi-spirit living mech.

One of the features that he only mentioned in part was that it not only came to life with four subordinate spirits, but that it could also generate more if necessary!

Ves did not bother to explain the exact rules and conditions behind this vital mechanism because it was not relevant to most people.

Yet its importance was still great to the mech pilots and the owners of the Fey Fianna.

The Fey Fianna was designed to pair with 4 fey at the start. There was nothing stopping it from controlling additional fey, for example ones that had been left behind on the battlefield, but without any spare subordinate spirits, the control wouldn't be as good.

A true living fey had to be occupied by a subordinate spirit!

In order to develop a reliable solution to this problem, Ves came up with multiple ideas before settling on a single approach.

He granted the Fey Fianna with the ability to create its own subordinate spirits on demand!

This was like a human operating on his own spirituality so that he could make his own companion spirit!

While it sounded crazy at first, the difference between a Fey Fianna and a human was that the design of the former was completely under control.

Ves had many different ways to program elaborate functions in his mech designs. It was easy enough for him to alter the spiritual design and implement a self-carving function that would enable

the Fey Fianna to create additional subordinate spirits so that it could perfectly control 5 or more subordinate spirits at the same time!

The only requirement was that the Fey Fianna received permission from the mech pilot to do so and that it had enough strength to donate to the new subordinate spirit.

Each birth of a new subordinate spirit weakened the dominant spirit to an extent.

This traumatic process should not be performed in quick succession as the dominant spirit needed time to heal and regain a lot of strength.

In this regard, the faster the growth, the more often it could split new subordinate spirits!

There was no theoretical limit to this process. So long as the Fey Fianna continued to heal and grow in power, it would always have enough spirituality to spare for this purpose.

It could even perform if it was upgraded into a high-ranking mech!

Ves could already imagine the sights of the future.

Perhaps one day, expert pilots would emerge with dozens of living fey at its beck and call.

Ace pilots may show up that could control hundreds of living fey at a time!

As for what might happen next, there may be a chance that the Army of One would no longer be the only drone mech among the ranks of gods pilots.

Of course, that was too far away from him. Ves mainly implemented this handy function in order to serve the more immediate needs of his future customers.

If there was any downside to relying on growth to expand the subordinate spirits of his Fey Fianna, it was that it was almost impossible to make a copy of this drone mech that could perfectly command more fey from the start.

Unless Ves was willing to spend his valuable time on fabricating a masterwork Fey Fianna that started out as a third order living mech right from the beginning, all other Fey Fiannas had to start with just 4 fey!

Fortunately, the Fey Fianna was not a mech that emphasized quantity. It was much more logical to upgrade the existing fey that the drone mech had at its disposal.

He made sure to emphasize that as he explained the other fey types.

"The water hyper energy shield fey can serve as an important lifesaver and defensive tool." He said as he patted the surface of one of the fey in question. "Since it is based on water energy, it can get close enough to the main body without generating any conflict. In fact, sticking together will be beneficial for them both as they can increase the concentration of water energy even further, thereby enabling them to amplify the performance of their defenses even further. You will be able to witness the defensive strength of its energy shield later."

While the Fey Fianna benefited from an excellent adaptive modular armor system, it was not ideal for the mech to rely on it for protection.

The energy shield fey might not possess a lot of energy cells, but they were somewhat sufficient to power a single primary function.

The more the energy shield fey could rely on water energy to strengthen its defenses, the longer its energy cells could last.

This meant that older and more experienced subordinate spirits would be able to resist way more attacks when inhabiting this fey model!

After explaining a few essential technical details about the energy shield fey, Ves gestured towards another essential fey model.

"Unlike many of the drone mechs that are only able to equip themselves with thin and needle-like spurs, a fey has enough internal space to fit a relatively compact space suppressor module."

It was a rather tight fit, and Ves had to compromise on a lot of structural components, but the space suppressor along with other supporting parts finally managed to fit into the fey design.

This was incredibly useful as it was always better to throw a lot of disposable spurs rather than more valuable mechs onto alien warships!

Space suppression technology had become an essential tool for red humanity.

From preventing alien warships from warping away to weakening their powerful transphasic energy shields, space suppressors had already become a mandatory addition to every mech force in the short time they became available.

"The space suppressor fey is augmented by water hypers as well." Ves explained to his audience.

"That is not because it is meant to align with the defenses of the main body. This is because I have discovered rules and interactions that can amplify the effects of a space suppressor. Let me give you a demonstration."

One of the space suppressor fey flew forward and stopped in front of a transphasic energy shield that just came online.

It went without saying that it was a simulation of a typical transphasic energy shield that one would see around an alien warship.

When the fey activated its space suppressor module, an invisible energy field came online.

Since this field obeyed the inverse-square law, the effectiveness of this space suppressor field was much more effective at close range than at a distance.

While this should have allowed the fey to make a substantial impact on the transphasic energy shield, the reality was that their power levels were too far apart.

It was like hitting a stone against a dam!

Ves grinned as he saw this result. This was just a reference test. The true power of his space suppressors would become clear soon enough!

Under the instruction of the mech pilot, the space suppressor fey began to absorb as much water energy in the environment as possible.

As an energy vortex formed around this fey, the space suppressor field began to fluctuate.

The field started to glow in blue as the insertion of water energy changed the energy field's properties in a profound manner.

Then, the space suppressor module started to pulse from the center. This pulsing pattern repeated over and over, causing the effects of the energy field to become uneven.

Yet instead of making the effect weaker or less consistent, the transphasic energy shield started to destabilize more and more.

Even though the effect was still slight due to the difference in power level, the relatively small water suppressor fey was doing an excellent job at amplifying its performance.

As the water suppressor fey continued to make use of its water hypers, the glowing energy field gradually started to pulse increasingly harder.

The amplification bestowed by water energy became stronger with each subsequent pulse.

Soon enough, the blue glow started to take on the form of water waves that continually spread from the center of the fey.

These waves gained more and more 'momentum' and damaged the integrity of the transphasic energy shield increasingly more.

The wave illusion also became more realistic. They gained more detail and evoked the power of stormy waves in the middle of an ocean much better!

Even if this image was just false, due to certain rules, it could actually affect the performance of the space suppressor field in reality!

After the space suppressor fey battered the transphasic energy shield with enough waves, it finally broke!

For a moment, everyone had fallen silent.

Then, a lot of knowledgeable people started to talk to each other about the remarkable sight that they had just witnessed!

"How can that be? According to the specs listed by the table, the small-sized space suppressor should never have been able to exceed the restoration rate of that transphasic energy shield. Those water hypers must have strengthened the space suppression field, but I have never witnessed any instance where it had been amplified by this much!"

"I would have expected this to happen with a transphasic space suppressor. Only phasewater can effectively neutralize other phasewater effects. If this fey just now truly doesn't have a single drop of phasewater, then this humble construct holds the secret to breaking many powerful transphasic energy shields on a budget. I must find out the secret behind this application."

"This is true mech design! Our work is never about defeating the strong with even stronger mechs. It is about enabling the weak to defeat the strong! Professor Larkinson truly deserves his accolades if his skills are this good. If he can popularize and license out his proprietary method of amplifying the performance of space suppressors with water hypers, then he could earn a fortune!"

Ves allowed the people to speak among themselves for a time before he resumed his presentation.

"I am glad to see that enough of you understand the implications of what you have witnessed. What happened is not that complicated. The space suppressor controlled the power of water and blended it with space to form an effect that can deprive transphasic defenses of the advantages bestowed by

phasewater. After all, this substance has 'water' in its name, so when it becomes affected by the metaphysical waves, it would be hard for the phasewater to remain impervious."

What he just said was a rare accomplishment.

This was not the first time that a mech designer exploited the water element to weaken transphasic parts.

That did not mean it was common!

In this relatively early phase of the Hyper Generation, any mech that possessed a more effective but also affordable means of generating a space suppressor field had much less to fear from alien warships!