

The Mech 5881

Chapter 5881 Reasons to Fight

Ves wielded more power than ever before.

Mere mortals were never meant to have so much destructive power at their hands.

Though Ves was far more than an ordinary baseline human, the enormous strain of maintaining an empowered state that was far beyond his normal capacity continued to wear him down.

It was like lifting up a weight that was just a bit too much for him to handle. He constantly had to muster up his willpower and keep the heavy weight aloft, knowing that it would tear up his muscles and potentially inflict worse damage.

There was no way to describe the pain of bearing so much concentrated fire energy. Blinky tried his best to eject the huge influx of fiery energy as quickly as it entered his body, but the continuous exposure to power that was fundamentally incompatible with his own was not doing his body, his mind and Spirituality any favors!

Fire filled his entire being. Despite his various advantages, he shouldn't have been able to tolerate so much exposure to the energies released by a dormant entity that was at least partially a True God!

No mortal would have been able to withstand such might, and it was only due to his unorthodox cooperation with Caramond and Blinky that he was able to make it a little more bearable.

Even so, the powerful energy should have cooked his flesh and fried his Spirituality by now. The difference in strength and the lack of compatibility were significant hindrances that prevented him from fully acclimating to all of this burning power.

So why hadn't he died already?

It was due to the lightning baptism he received from the clone of the Subjugation King.

Whether intentional or not, each time his true body struck the energy barrier of the powerful lightning manifestation, his whole body would get shocked by tribulation lightning.

Initially, more of his muscles and other organic matter would break and tear from the destructive energies coursing through his body, but the creation energies that came after magically put everything back together.

This effect did not always work as ideal as he wished, but Ves found that as long as the countershocks were not too strong, his damaged flesh would always find a way to bounce back somehow.

Each time this happened, his flesh became a tiny bit stronger. Since Ves was extremely sensitive towards any manifestations of growth, he could easily track the slow but continuous rate of improvement of his phase lord cultivation.

He was already sure that his phasewater concentration had grown by at least 0.5 percent!

This might not sound like much, but it was a huge proportional improvement compared to his state from before the lightning tribulation.

A higher phasewater concentration not only meant that he had a lot more phasewater circulating through his veins, but also enabled him to expand the size of his body by another margin.

Ves actively increased his height and size to his new limit whenever possible. Letting his body expand on a gradual basis allowed Caramond to adjust to the new physical realities of gaining more mass without throwing him off-guard.

It helped that a larger and stronger body was able to tolerate the countershocks a little better.

This did not reduce his agony, though. When Caramond found out that Ves' true body gradually became more tolerant towards tribulation lightning, he sped up his pace and stuck increasingly closer to his target!

The cycle of destruction and rebirth was not contained to his massive true body either. Ves could feel that his Spirituality was getting cracked and healed at a dizzying pace during this fight.

The pain of feeling his most fundamental part of himself get torn and glued back together in a repetitive cycle made his state even more unbearable!

Combined with the strain of withstanding so much exposure of fire energy, any lesser being would have been driven mad a lot sooner!

Still, as much as Ves increasingly felt the urge to retreat or kill himself to escape all of this misery, he refused to give in to these easy cop outs.

This was hardly the first time he endured great pain in the hopes of earning a greater payoff.

Intellectually, he knew that this suffering was only temporary, and that the rewards for pushing through was more than worth the price.

The feedback of restoring his injuries and promoting his growth after every destruction and rebirth cycle was a powerful motivator that drove him to endure the constant pain. It had been quite a while since he last managed to promote his phase lord cultivation.

Already, his body had exceeded the proportions of a typical second-class mech. His height had almost doubled from his previous state, and he was gradually reducing his size difference with the clone of the Subjugation King.

When it came to phase lords, bigger was better.

His spatial abilities grew stronger due to multiplying the amount of phasewater he had at his disposal. His spatial barrier became increasingly stronger and helped a lot with reducing the sting of countershocks whenever the clone of the Subjugation King launched another destructive lightning attack.

Greater size translated into greater mass. This not only allowed Caramond to put more momentum behind his string of attacks, but also made Ves a lot harder to assassinate.

Already, Ves had less to fear from ordinary mechs.

If Ves ever managed to evolve into a greater phase lord, then the only way to kill him in a short amount of time was to employ a planetoid-killing weapon!

An even stronger reason for him to grit his teeth and endure all of the punishment was the steady growth and refinement of his Spirituality.

Typical mech designers had to work hard to achieve the same progress over decades. As passive cultivators, there was not much they could do to speed up their growth in spiritual strength.

While there was far more to becoming a successful mech designer than possessing a lot of raw spiritual strength, it certainly made any professional's job a lot easier if they had more to spare!

At the very least, Ves vaguely felt that he was shaving off years from the threshold where he could potentially trigger his ascension to the rank of Master Mech Designer.

This did not mean it was a good idea to do so. He still needed to develop his design philosophy, expand his knowledge base and design a lot of different mechs before he was ready to take the next step.

The benefit to growing his Spirituality so much was that he would not get bottlenecked by this requirement when the time had finally come.

The imaginary planet grew larger and stronger. Everything became a little more solid and stable than before. Even the very boundaries responsible for protecting and containing the Blinkyverse grew firmer. It became increasingly harder for hostile parties to intrude into this private space!

Of course, Blinky benefited a lot more from all of this growth. The lightning baptism affected him as well. Not only was it improving his capacity to serve as a summoning vessel for the likes of Caramond, the Blinkyverse also experienced a lot of improvement!

Blinky actually played an important role in reducing the damage inflicted by all of the tribulation lightning by redirecting a part of it into his internal universe.

The imaginary planet grew larger and stronger. Everything became a little more solid and stable than before. Even the very boundaries responsible for protecting and containing the Blinkyverse grew firmer. It became increasingly harder for hostile parties to intrude into this private space!

"Hah! We are growing stronger! As long as we keep this up, we shall save the Dominion of Man and lead red humanity to a new Age of Conquest!"

Ves responded by curling his lips upwards.

Personal motivations played a large role in his decision to persevere, but there was one overarching reason why he willingly subjected himself to all of this painful torture.

He wanted to do right by his creations.

Caramond was a promising ancestral spirit that brought hope and strength in a time where red humanity needed his help.

Ves could not claim credit for the initial development of the Dominion of Man, but now that he had transformed her into a living dreadnought with insane potential, he gained a sense of responsibility over the evolving warship.

Though Ves tried his best to maintain his wits, his constant exposure to a powerful spiritual entity that was obsessed with human supremacy was gradually bleeding into his mind.

Not that he needed it to strengthen his commitment to save his creations.

As a mech designer and a creator, he felt it was his duty to do whatever it took to preserve his creations. The nightmare of the Elemental Lord constantly pushed him to step up and do what was necessary to avoid a similar outcome.

If he was a mech pilot or traditional swordsman, Ves bet that his willpower would have already sublimated by this time!

Even though his current life trajectory closed off this progression route, it didn't diminish the importance of willpower.

He had spent enough time among expert pilots, ace pilots and god pilots to understand what made them different from other people.

"Careful! He is about to unleash a wide-area attack!"

The Subjugation King never made this challenge easy for his 'valued slave'.

He refused to be baited into unleashing his power attacks into open space.

If Caramond positioned Ves' true body above the stationary lightning manifestation, the Subjugation King would simply ignore his attacker and continue to blast the hull of the Dominion of Man.

The only way the trio could stop the clone of the God King from inflicting more permanent damage to the vessel was to go on the offensive and drain the energy shield as quickly as possible.

Though Caramond, Blinky and Ves had become increasingly more proficient at leveraging their various advantages to evade the Subjugation King's lightning bolts, this time the alien had begun to form a ball of tribulation lightning that was rapidly accumulating a lot of power!

There was no way for Ves' true body to evade a radial explosion of tribulation lightning once the ball finally went critical!

"We need to distance ourselves!" Ves quickly advised.

A radial explosion in vacuum rapidly weakened in power over larger distances due to the inverse-square law.

In other words, more distance equals much less pain!

Given that Ves was already suffering a lot, he really did not want to go over his tolerance limit!

The trifacta controlling his true body used every trick at their disposal to rapidly disengage from the Subjugation Lord.

Caramond landed a powerful kick at the energy barrier before using it as a launching pad to push the giant body under his command in the opposite direction.

Blinky channeled a lot of fire energy into a large and barely controllable 'jet engine' that pushed Ves' true body away.

Ves on the other hand strained his multitasking ability even further by trying to execute three actions at once!

First, he shrunk his true body as quickly as possible in order to reduce its exposure to the impending explosion.

Second, he stimulated his Kelsis organ beyond its limit to form the most powerful unidirectional spatial barrier behind his true body's back.

Third, he squeezed his Maracos organ to the point of damaging it in order to warp the surrounding space and increase his effective velocity as much as possible!

A flash was all Ves and the others perceived before they got caught in the most powerful discharge of power that the Subjugation King had unleashed since his clone's appearance!

Ves let out a wordless cry of pain as the back of his shrunken but still-too-large body had turned into a charred and blackened mess.

As his body finally collided against a half-torn primary gun battery, he tried his best to observe what had happened.

A large chunk of the hull was just gone. The radial explosion had utterly destroyed the hull plating and structure within a radius of at least a hundred meters.

Even though it was just a pothole relative to the enormous hull of the Dominion of Man, the damage was still extensive enough to breach multiple compartments and fry plenty of power lines and circuits in the nearest intact sections of the ship!

"We can't let this bastard tear the Dominion of Man apart any further!"

The good news was that the clone had finally lost his annoyingly strong energy barrier. Perhaps one of the reasons why that last explosion was so powerful was due to releasing this protective measure.

The bad news was that the Subjugation King assumed a more active fighting posture. The alien was bound to present greater challenges to Ves!

Chapter 5882 Now We're Talking

The clone of the Subjugation King had become more vulnerable now that he had lost his energy barrier.

However, the powerful tribulation manifestation still exuded an air of absolute dominance that offended Caramond.

It was as if the powerful God King still did not treat this historic event as seriously as Ves and others whose lives were at stake.

The outcome of this tribulation event would have far-reaching effects on human civilization in the Red Ocean!

This was why Ves, Caramond and everyone who served on the Dominion of Man committed so much to this fight. They willingly put their lives on the line and made the ultimate sacrifice just to secure a tiny advantage in this lopsided confrontation.

To learn that the Subjugation King only harbored contempt towards his opposition was a grave insult to the human spirit.

Ves knew better than to call the God King out, though. The weak had no right to complain in front of the strong.

Besides, it was better for red humanity if their future enemy continued to underestimate the opposition he might face once he arrived in the Red Ocean.

As Ves and his current partners tried to recover from their earlier exertions, they continued to pay close attention to the God King.

"It hurts."

A powerful infusion of creation energies had done much to restore the charred and blackened flesh on his back. His phase lord physique helped a lot to speed up his recovery, but even that was not enough to restore all of the damage.

His back remained injured. The only effective way to repair all of the damage during this fight was to allow another body part to get hit by tribulation lightning and hope that it would spread to the more heavily injured parts of his body.

Ves gritted his teeth. This was not going to be easy.

"#@#&@&#."

"YOU HAVE BARELY MET MY EXPECTATIONS. YOU ARE STILL BY FAR THE WEAKEST OF MY VALUED SLAVES. YOUR CAPACITY TO ADAPT AND LEARN IS SATISFACTORY, BUT YOU ARE STILL AN INCOMPETENT FIGHTER."

Damnit! Ves willingly subjected himself to a lot of pain in order to channel so much fire energy!

Compared to his normal self, his combat power had skyrocketed. Fighting against ace mechs was not a dream anymore. He had already endured several powerful blows that would have torn any other human apart a million times over!

"I am... not a fighter... but I can still learn." Ves responded to the arrogant alien tyrant.

"#\$&\$@%\$@."

"I DESIRE NO LESS FROM YOU. BY THE TIME I FINALLY ARRIVE AT THIS MINISCULE SEA OF STARS, I EXPECT YOU TO CAST ASIDE YOUR WEAKNESS. NO VALUED SLAVE OF MINE IS ALLOWED TO BE AS WEAK AS YOUR CURRENT SELF. YOUR CRUDE TECHNIQUE OF BORROWING THE FIGHTING METHODS OF OTHER SOULS IS EFFECTIVE, BUT ULTIMATELY COMPRISES ANOTHER WEAKNESS."

Ves snarled but made sure to temper his pride. He did not want to provoke the Subjugation King into lashing out. It was better to keep the arrogant alien in a complacent mood.

"I am not your slave!"

"FALSE. I HAVE ALREADY LOCKED MY CHAIN ON YOUR SOUL."

In order to illustrate this point, the clone of the Subjugation King raised one of his limbs and made a familiar yanking motion.

An illusionary chain became visible and pulled onto the soul mark that was buried inside Ves!

Despite the lack of physical substance, the unnaturally strong and solid chain somehow managed to pull his entire physical mass forward!

Ves and his partners quickly tried to stop their forward progress and stabilize Ves' body in the air.

"Stop doing that! If you want me to fight, then I will do so. I am going to cut off this chain and remove this mark of yours as soon as I can!"

"\$#&\$%#."

"I ENCOURAGE YOU TO DO SO. IT WILL MAKE THE HUNT MUCH MORE INTERESTING. YOU CANNOT ESCAPE MY CHAINS, BUT I WILL ENJOY YOUR STRUGGLE TO ESCAPE YOUR INEVITABLE FATE."

The soul mark that had dug into his Spirituality began to burn and inflict a different kind of pain on Ves.

He badly wanted to get rid of it, but there was nothing in his arsenal that could remove the small but insanely strong mark!

What was worse was that heavy exposure to tribulation lightning had not resulted in its ejection.

Instead, the infusion of destruction and creation energies had caused the soul mark to settle in ever stronger than before!

It was as if the tribulation storm treated the soul mark as an implant that was supposed to be a helpful addition to Ves. Each exposure to tribulation lightning caused his Spirituality to adapt and fuse a little more to the soul mark.

This was completely detrimental to Ves!

There was no way that an old and powerful God King would make a trivial mistake by planting a soul mark that would get wiped away by tribulation lightning.

Ves suspected that because the soul mark was condensed out of a significant portion of energy that powered the tribulation storm, any subsequent exposure to tribulation lightning only facilitated its purpose even more.

It was also easy to surmise that the Subjugation King deliberately manipulated the tribulation strikes to facilitate his hold over his latest prized slave.

Ves inwardly shook his head. He could go over the implications of the soul mark at a later date. He still needed to fight in order to save the Dominion of Man.

Caramond took advantage of his recent growth to deepen his control over Ves' true body. The evolving ancestral spirit no longer stuck to the martial arts mastered by the elite Dread Marines, but had begun to draw upon the skills and experiences of elite soldiers throughout the new frontier.

Blinky also leveraged his greater strength. He had become considerably more adept at channeling and shaping fire energy.

So long as Caramond continued to keep the volatile energy in line, Blinky was able to channel greater quantities of fire energy while also making sure that they induced slightly less strain of Ves.

It was difficult to calculate how much stronger Ves had become since the start of this temporary partnership, but he loosely estimated that his combat power had multiplied by 2 to 3 times!

This was a dramatic boost of strength, yet Ves still did not feel he had a realistic chance of defeating the clone of the Subjugation King.

The gap in power was still too much, even after he had made so much progress.

Despite the long odds, Ves refused to give up. Anything could happen in a battle. So long as he was able to drag it out, he was sure he could absorb enough tribulation lightning to finally land the killing blow.

The only question was whether the Subjugation King would allow him to stall for so long.

The fight resumed in an instant.

The Subjugation King had already begun to show signs of impatience. Rather than allowing the alien tyrant to make the first move, the trio had decided to take the initiative!

A large fire energy jet engine propelled Ves' true body to an impressive degree!

This time, the trio did not settle for landing a simple punch and kick. It would require way more than that to inflict real harm on the clone.

Ves, Caramond and Blinky had reached such an excellent state of coordination that they all took the correct actions to prepare a more advanced form attack.

His posture shifted in a way that suggested that he was looking to collide head-on against his target.

A spatial barrier formed in front of Ves to protect him from attacks and collisions.

A torrent of fire energy extended from one of his arms and rapidly turned into a lance made out of concentrated fire energy!

What was interesting about this lance was that its tip was shaped like a large and oversized bulb.

This was because Blinky modeled it after the transphasic explosive blastlances equipped by the Redlance mech model!

Although Ves had been forced to heavily simplify the design on the fly in order to allow Blinky to reconstruct it with the help of fire energy, the hasty imitation successfully captured the essence of the original weapon!

Ves even performed the unprecedented act of forcing a drop of his lifeblood out of his fingertip so that it could empower his temporary blastlance!

This was the secret to simulating transphasic weapons outside his body!

When Ves tried to manipulate the drop that contained a small amount of phasewater, his Maracos organ was able to connect to it as if the separated blood was still an extension of his body!

"Taste our Fireblood Lance!"

A powerful detonation triggered directly after the trio had driven the tip of the 'Fireblood Lance' against the glowing surface of the clone!

The explosion was a lot more powerful than any other attack that the trio had unleashed beforehand!

Since the original blastlances were designed to make their explosions as directional as possible, the simulated version made out of fire energy did a good job at directing much of the explosive force forward.

The result was that the floating Subjugation King finally moved from his spot!

He had already lost his footing due to his latest area attack, but whatever power he employed to anchor him above a hole on the surface of the dreadnought clearly failed to compensate for the latest attack!

Though the Subjugation King's face was too alien to read his expressions, the clone's body language and shift in aura indicated that he might not have expected such a blow. His three eyes pointedly looked down on the shallow hole on his lightning-forged body.

"#\$&."

"AMUSING. YOU ARE ADAPTING FASTER TO THE BATTLEFIELD THAN I PREVIOUSLY ANTICIPATED."

"Thank you. As a creator, I thought why not bring some of my works to life in this battle?"

Since Ves had already started to fight like a mech or biomech of sorts, why not try to summon their weapons?

After all, very few mechs had a habit of fighting with their fists!

The vast majority of his works fought by relying on internal or external weapons. Ves had ample knowledge on how they were designed, so he could theoretically replicate their mechanisms and proportions with fire energy.

Of course, this was not a simple matter of copying a weapon design and filling it up with fire energy.

Ves had to heavily tax his mind to simplify and remove a lot of complications that simply did not apply when shaping them out of volatile fire energy.

He half-expected this experiment to fail, but since he was able to simulate a transphasic blastlance, there was nothing that could stop him from referencing his greatest hits and adapting other weapons!

The only limit was his imagination, understanding and improvisation ability. He had to assume the mindset of a mech designer in order to perform all of the analytical processes necessary to translate a mech weapon into a fire energy weapon!

"I will make you bleed!"

The fight had already resumed. The powerful alien already adjusted his body and responded to the trio's followup maneuvers by extending a sharp bone spike out of one of his limbs!

Though it was not a sword, the Subjugation King almost wielded it like one!

Caramond initially wanted to close in to stab the two transphasic fire energy daggers, but quickly shifted the limbs under his control to cross the fiery blades and block the initial thrust!

The brief contact did not just block the bone spike, but also caused it to release a jolt of tribulation lightning that briefly numbed the limbs holding the daggers.

The brief interruption lasted just enough for the Subjugation King to thrust his other limb forward!

A second bone surged straight at Ves' unprotected chest, only to get blocked by an illusionary transphasic armor plate formed out of fire energy!

That did not stop a second jolt of tribulation lightning from shocking Ves' true body, but it at least saved him from getting stabbed!

Ves grinned when he saw that his latest effort succeeded in blocking an attack that promised to inflict a lot of pain.

"Now we're talking."

Chapter 5883 Fire Energy Raiment

A blazing skirmish took place above the surface of the Dominion of Man!

Two glowing shapes circled around each other. They frequently exchanged blows that constantly generated explosions of fire and lightning.

The larger shape that glowed with sickly green lightning constantly sought to damage and tarnish the radiance of the smaller shape surrounded by fiery orange flames.

While the larger monster launched more destructive attacks that often inflicted a lot of collateral damage onto the hull of the Dominion of Man, the slightly smaller monster exerted his power in increasingly more inventive ways!

As the two giant and distinctly inhuman shapes circled around for another clash, the one that was actively being propped up by the Spark Reactor of the Dominion of Man formed another blastlance and drove it into the lightning-empowered enemy.

A powerful explosion of fire energy knocked back the gigantic alien form until the clone of a much more powerful being collided against the side of a ruined gun battery!

Despite the humiliating display, the Subjugation King did not express any hint of displeasure.

In fact, the powerful God King displayed more and more satisfaction as Ves and his partners put up an increasingly better fight!

Given that the clone of the Subjugation King allowed so many incoming attacks to land when he definitely possessed the foresight and strength to block or evade them, there was no way this powerful opponent was fighting at his full strength.

This caused Ves to become increasingly more suspicious at the attitude of the Subjugation King.

It seemed more and more likely that the powerful alien was deliberately modulating his combat strength in order to present a difficult but not insurmountable challenge to Ves.

If that was the Subjugation King's play, then it was obviously working.

Ves and his partners constantly felt the pressure to improve and develop better ways to fight. They had grown so rapidly during this high-stakes fight that it was unbelievable to think that they weren't originally meant to fight!

While the rapid growth should have been a cause for joy, Ves did not entirely treat this as a favorable development.

The fact that the Subjugation King never actually lost the upper hand was proof that he still had enough fighting power to spare.

As both Ves and the clone of the God King fought more intensely against each other, the inevitable outcome was greater collateral damage!

For example, the Subjugation King tore out the gun barrel of a nearby broken turret and utilized it as a club to bash against Ves' true body!

The hardened transphasic hyper alloy struck a hard blow against the fire energy armor plating that Ves and Blinky had shaped over the tall true body.

By now, half of the body was covered with glowing orange armor plating. Blinky worked hard to shape and condense a lot of fire energy into a solid armor raiment that would stay in place and keep up with the movements of the body.

Fire energy was not originally suited for defense, so Blinky had to work extra hard to make it behave according to the design supplied by Ves!

The fact that it worked a lot better than it should was because Ves had donated copious amounts of his own lifeblood to reinforce the temporary armor plating!

Ves had discovered that his blood was not only a source of phasewater, but also possessed a much stronger spiritual component than he expected!

He believed that this was partially due to all of the fire energy coursing in his body. His blood must have assimilated some of it, producing unknown effects that allowed him to manipulate it in increasingly more versatile ways.

Though Ves expected his blood to lose this extraordinary charge as soon as the supply of high-quality fire energy was cut off, he was determined to make the most of this temporary advantage!

Ves did not hesitate to spill liters of his own blood to reinforce his summoned weapons and armor.

His powerful true body was easily able to generate replacement blood, so he was not afraid of dying from blood loss.

The more serious problem of his tactic was that it was not so easy to replace the lost phasewater.

As a result, the longer he fought, the more his phasewater concentration dropped!

Ves endured real pain each time he expended his phasewater-infused blood, but he saw no other way to empower his fire energy armaments to a level where they could keep up with the clone of the Subjugation King.

The only reason why he wasn't too worried about spilling out so much phasewater was because the regular countershocks spontaneously replenished his depleted reserves.

He was actually maintaining a careful balance. He constantly needed to control his expenditure of phasewater to ensure it did not exceed the phasewater produced by exposure to tribulation energies.

Ves still grew stronger so long as he maintained a positive balance. He just did so at a slower rate than before.

Even so, it still wasn't enough!

The trio might be able to pressure the clone of the Subjugation King, but they weren't able to hinder the powerful alien from damaging the ship!

Many times, the powerful tribulation manifestation somehow found a window of opportunity to launch a casual strike at the increasingly more damaged hull.

So much of the exterior of this side of the dreadnought had been wrecked by previous attacks that the Subjugation King was able to damage or destroy important systems!

"#\$#&."

"YOU MUST DO BETTER IF YOU WISH TO SAVE YOUR PRECIOUS SHIP."

The powerful alien clone allowed the giant transphasic fireblood axe to strike his shoulder and inflict a shallow wound. A powerful jolt of tribulation lighting instantly zapped Ves shortly afterwards.

Though the wound was actually a bit more serious than it looked, the clone of the God King ignored the injury and proceeded to reach out and grabbed Ves' armored form with his limbs.

"\$&\$#%."

"YOUR FIGHTING SPIRIT IS BARELY ADEQUATE, BUT YOUR RELIANCE ON BORROWED ENERGY WILL BE YOUR DOOM."

The clone exerted a huge amount of strength as he threw Ves' true body right into a large hole on the hull of the dreadnought!

Ves uttered a soundless cry of pain as his body crashed through a damaged bulkhead and collided against an exposed azure energy shield generator!

The shell and the components of the shield generator instantly crumbled upon impact!

If not for the fact that it had already been depowered, the destroyed generator would have produced a painful explosion!

Ves did not dare to take his time to recover from the impact. The longer he remained buried inside the dreadnought, the greater the chance the Subjugation King would come and resume the fight in a much more sensitive location!

Blinky generated a powerful simulated flight system onto the back of the armor raiment. It quickly generated a lot of thrust power, allowing Ves to propel him back outside the ship!

The clone of the Subjugation King quickly greeted his opponent with a powerful ball of tribulation lightning that he had formed with his limbs.

Yet before the powerful alien could launch this destructive attack, Ves raised his arm and waited for Blinky to generate a simplified version of a transphasic ballistic pistol!

There was no way that Ves could simulate the performance of a luminar crystal weapon or other advanced firearm, but it was no problem for him to generate one of the simplest firearms developed by humanity!

A quick trigger pull caused the pistol to launch a phasewater-infused bullet that consisted of condensed fire energy.

Although the projectile was not particularly fast compared to a round fired by a gauss weapon, the distance was so short that the empowered bullet struck the lightning ball with hardly any delay.

Naturally, Caramond's borrowed marksmanship skill ensured that the shot struck the intended target even during a high-speed movement!

When the two concentrated energies came into direct contact with each other, only a single outcome was possible.

The lightning ball and the fire bullet exploded right when it was still in front of the clone of the God King!

The lightning manifestation clearly suffered a considerable amount of damage.

However, much of the tribulation energies contained within that ball had spilled into the environment. Only a fraction of the energies went on to fuel the growth of the trio!

Though Ves already started to come up with ideas on forming a ballistic cannon, he refrained from summoning them as it would continue to diminish the rewards gained from fighting this powerful alien bastard.

"I will take care of the design!"

As the destructive clash dragged on, Ves continually tried to design better weapons and equipment for himself.

The only possible pathway to victory was to get close and continue to shock himself as much as possible!

"Charge forward!"

"We need more weapons!"

"I will take care of the design!"

As the destructive clash dragged on, Ves continually tried to design better weapons and equipment for himself.

The fact that he was able to do this in the middle of the battlefield was a testament to his ability to excel in high-pressure environments!

Even though his Spirituality had endured so much strain that it was moving closer to total exhaustion, Ves forcibly concentrated a part of his mind on familiar design processes.

His efforts slowly bore fruit as his true body gradually seemed to turn more mechanical and multifaceted.

As his strength steadily increased through the constant feedback of tribulation energies, Blinky gradually managed to form a full-body suit of armor that largely resembled the appearance of a mech.

Various weapon modules started to appear onto the armor made out of fire energy.

Ves initially mounted a pair of flamethrowers on his wrists. They were useful at softening up the tribulation manifestation, but lacked the punch to inflict crippling injuries.

He then mounted a pair of missile shoulders that was regularly filled with transphasic unguided rockets. Every salvo struck quite hard, so much so that they often interrupted whatever big move that the clone of the Subjugation King attempted to pull off next.

Ves somehow managed to figure out how to simulate rudimentary energy weapons, though it was better to describe them as concentrated fire energy outlets.

Regardless, Ves copied aspects of the original design of the Mars and implemented a highly adapted version of the ARCEUS System onto his fire energy raiment!

All of these changes enabled Ves to fight increasingly more like a hybrid mech!

In fact, he fought much like Patriarch Reginald Cross, who always liked to launch unrelenting attacks at closer ranges!

The ranged weapons were not meant for Ves to snipe his opponent at a distance. They were made to pressure the clone and ensure that he did not recover any of his injuries.

Ves inflicted the most serious blows with the help of his transphasic melee weapons!

Blastlances were one of his favorite solutions, but he also summoned other weapons ranging from axes, greatswords and even daggers.

Though Ves had absolutely no clue how to proficiently wield these weapons, Caramond had access to a broad swath of skills that he was constantly mastering with every exchange of blows.

The clone of the God King regularly blocked the incoming strikes with the help of blood spikes that extended from his body, but they were anything but perfect.

Caramond always chained his moves so that he eventually managed to sneak an attack past his opponent's guard.

Ves and his partners managed to achieve the greatest success when they managed to unbalance their foe with the help of all of the ranged weapons blasting at the clone.

Once the tribulation manifestation exhibited the slightest of openings, Ves' true body surged forward and relied on momentum to chop down a simulated greatsword!

Though a pair of crossed bone spikes managed to block the heavy attack, the upper half of the enormous blade had turned as if there was a hinge just beforehand!

This unexpectedly caused the greatsword to turn into a weird version of a warpick.

What mattered was that the tip of the blade managed to sink into the shoulder of the clone of the God King just enough to sever the arm!

The separated limb soon exploded, unleashing much more tribulation energies that pushed Ves and his partners back and forcibly fueled their growth by a significant margin!

Chapter 5884 Harsh Light

Cutting off the arm of his opponent was the first real damage that Ves managed to inflict on the clone of the God King.

Ves, Blinky and Caramond had all pushed themselves to their limit and maybe even beyond in order to attain this remarkable result.

Of course, the explosion that ensued right afterwards had dealt a powerful blow to the trio.

None of them came out of this incident unscathed.

"The detestable aliens never play fair. None of them have proven to be capable of taking their losses with grace."

Caramond suffered such a strong backlash that his ongoing transition had been set back due to all of the damage he endured. Though the exposure and restoration of his injuries would ultimately result in developing a stronger foundation, the problem was that it would take even longer before he attained the full power of a True God!

"Mrow..."

Blinky had been overworking himself during this entire 'duel'. As impressive as it was for him to channel the power of a True God-level entity, his actual cultivation was far weaker than the entity residing in the center of the Spark Reactor!

Working with fire energy was like handling lava barehanded. If not for the assistance provided by Caramond, the huge concentration of volatile energies would have caused Blinky to immolate himself.

As for Ves himself, the latest blow had dealt serious damage to his Spirituality. It had cracked, healed, cracked and healed so many times that he truly felt bone tired at this time.

It became harder for him to maintain his consciousness and keep up his awareness when all of the fire and lightning damage wore out his mind and dulled his edge.

The consequences were serious. As he dug himself out of a broken and shattered sensor array on the side of the hull, Ves realized that the explosion generated by cutting off the arm of the clone had pushed him to his breaking point.

He had already reached his limit just by maintaining his current empowered state. Already, Blinky was unable to channel as much fire energy as before, causing the heavily-damaged fire energy raiment to collapse and dissipate into the environment.

It was as if Ves had exhausted the durability of his equipment. Armor plating crumbled apart. His wrist and shoulder-mounted weapon systems melted from his body. The energy weapon hardpoints that comprised of his imitation ARCEUS System lost their shape and disappeared from view.

Ves felt a lot weaker than before despite the fact that the latest round of lightning baptism should have boosted his growth by a hefty margin.

In an ideal reality, Ves would have been able to digest the tribulation energies in an instant and leverage his newfound strength at peak efficiency.

However, he and his partners were all held back by their mortal weaknesses and limitations.

None of them possessed the capacity to recover from their injuries in an instant.

It did not matter that they had access to a seemingly endless supply of fire energy from the Spark Reactor. Having access to lots of energy did not mean that Ves and the rest were qualified to wield it in battle.

They had been trying to fight by swinging the equivalent of oversized clubs throughout this entire bout. That had netted them good results, but there was a limit to everything. Their arms ultimately grew too tired to swing their weapons any further.

Of course, that was not a reason for Ves, Blinky and Caramond to give up. There was too much at stake in this fight.

According to the rules that governed tribulation manifestations, their bodies may be formed out of energy, but they were supposed to mimic the physiques of their organic counterparts as much as possible.

This meant that the loss of a limb should form a crippling injury. Unless a member of the so-called krelion race was able to regenerate physical injuries in an instant, the clone of the Subjugation King should have lost a lot of combat effectiveness!

As Ves steadily maneuvered his giant and half-covered true body out of the wrecked section of the ship, he immediately tried to ascertain the state of his adversary.

The good news was that the arm of the clone remained absent.

The bad news was that the clone still exuded a lot of confidence and arrogance!

It was as if the loss of a vital limb hardly represented any loss in combat effectiveness!

If not for the fact that Ves could sense that the total energy level of his adversary had dropped after losing a limb, he might not be able to believe that he had actually weakened his opponent!

The Subjugation King's glowing three eyes bore down on Ves' ragged form and seemed to express a measure of disappointment.

"#\$&\$&%@."

"I HAVE ALREADY WARNED YOU THAT YOUR RELIANCE ON BORROWED ENERGY WILL BE YOUR DOOM. IT IS INTRIGUING TO SEE THAT YOUR PITIFUL RACE OF SOFT-SKINNED WEAKLINGS ARE ABLE TO FIGHT SO WELL, BUT YOU ARE AKIN TO CHILDREN PLAYING WITH FORCES THAT YOU DO NOT COMPREHEND. IF THIS IS THE EXTENT OF YOUR STRUGGLE, THEN I HAVE NO FURTHER INTEREST IN PROLONGING THIS FARCE. SUBMIT TO ME, OR SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES."

Ves grimaced. Those piercing green eyes seemed to see right through him and his partners. It was not as if they did a good job at hiding their actual states. None of them had developed any techniques that could hide their actual states from the piercing gaze of a superior cultivator.

"We... can still fight. We humans may be inferior to you in many ways, but we are not lacking in courage and conviction! I will fight to the death to give my creations a chance to live!"

At this time, Ves had no energy to spare for wordplay. He could only voice the feelings that he held dear and express his true thoughts.

He had already endured so much suffering to come this far. There was no way he wanted to falter when there was finally a real chance of attaining victory and securing the continued survival of one of his grandest and most ambitious creations to date!

The specter of the Elemental Lord constantly loomed in his mind.

Like a soldier suffering from a case of PTSDs, Ves frequently received flashes in his mind of the moment where the Elemental Lord completely crumbled into ash after it had failed to pass the test that determined the five-element mech's right to exist.

The fear of causing a repeat of that traumatic occurrence and his sense of obligation as a mech designer continued to keep Ves going, if only barely.

"The human race... shall never kneel before the alien." Caramond conveyed his indomitable stance. "Since the Age of Conquest, our civilization has never surrendered its sovereignty to inhuman tyrants. Every human has the obligation to fight to the death to resist alien encroachment!"

"Mrow!" Blinky concurred despite the fact that he was a cat rather than a human.

The Subjugation King did not look too upset that his adversaries refused to surrender despite their awful state.

"#\$%&@."

"YOU DO NOT COMPREHEND THE GAP IN STRENGTH BETWEEN US. IT IS TIME TO TEACH YOU HOW OUTMATCHED YOU ARE. UNDER THE ILLUMINATION OF THE GREAT LIGHTHOUSE, I SHALL NO LONGER HOLD BACK AND UTILIZE MY TRUE STRENGTH TO TEACH YOU WHY I AM A KING OF THE GODS."

The tarnished lightning coursing through the clone's body diminished to an extent.

Instead, his body began to glow increasingly brighter!

Ves had the illusion that he was looking at a deity of the luminar race.

The slightly chromatic brightness emanating from the clone of the God King had turned into a miniature star, one that radiated so much light and power that Ves actually winced as he found it difficult to look directly at his opponent!

The power level of the clone had not changed, but by switching to the light attribute, the clone suddenly radiated a lot more threat than before!

From what Ves managed to gather from the alien tyrant's previous speech, he learned that the krelion race and civilization likely developed a powerful obsession towards light.

This was not a surprise as Messier 87 was one of the brightest and most luminous galaxies on this side of the cosmos. It also harbored many exceptionally bright and powerful light sources, one of which was the gigantic plumes of plasma that continually got ejected from the supermassive black hole in the center!

Whatever the case, it became clear that the Subjugation King had been playing around when he previously wielded the power of lightning.

The alien's mastery over light energy was so much stronger that it felt as if he could melt and irradiate the entire hull of the Dominion of Man if he amplified his radiance any further!

Already, Ves could see that the nearest sections of the broken and torn hull sections of the dreadnought were beginning to weaken and collapse under the tyrannical light.

There was nothing warm, gentle or pure about the light released by the clone of the Subjugation King.

This was the cruel and merciless light of the cosmos that disintegrated anything that failed to endure its brightness!

If the actual God King was here, then the Subjugation King would probably be able to destroy entire planets and star systems just by shining his all-powerful light at full power.

This was the true strength of a krelion God King!

"Ngh..."

Ves struggled to maintain his strength under all of this radiance. The light was so overbearing that simply getting illuminated by it was already beginning to destabilize his true body and fraying his already worn Spirituality even further!

Caramond was able to endure the radiance a bit better, but Blinky found himself unable to channel as much fire energy as before due to the increased pressure.

Their hopes started to dwindle as this continuous attack had already pushed them over the edge.

There was no way they could proceed forward and interrupt the clone's tyrannical attack method under these conditions.

Ves already started to see spots in his eyes due to all of the brightness around him. He struggled to figure out a way to overcome this latest challenge.

"Wait a second."

He had almost forgotten about them, but he still had a few cards left to play!

Ves did not even hesitate when he executed his latest plan.

He first folded his true body back into a different space. This shrunk his gigantic form and dramatically decreased how much of it got exposed to the God King's damaging light.

He then proceeded to summon the singed but functional Flower Parasol out of his System Space and immediately utilized its flower-embroidered canopy to shield him from the light.

"Ahhh!"

It turned out that the Flower Parasol fared exceptionally well under the current circumstances!

It sort of made sense as a parasol was not only designed to block the rain, but also the harsh light of a hot day.

The parasol actually acted like a flower that was eagerly soaking the light generated by a local star. Its capacity to absorb light was quite high. Ves did not have to worry about the artifact drying out in the immediate future.

The reprieve was incredibly helpful, but Ves was not done with his plan of action.

He retrieved another object out of his System Space. The Qi Restoration Potion did not feel particularly strong, but it generated an undeniable sense of attraction now that Ves had been driven to a state of exhaustion.

There was no reason to hesitate. Ves fumbled around before emptying the entire contents through his gullet in a single motion!

He did not have to wait too long to feel the effects of this mysterious potion. A new wellspring of energy began to form in his stomach. It churned and sent out waves of refreshment that quickly encompassed his Spirituality!

His eyes widened as he started to feel his exhaustion receding!

"It's working!"

Chapter 5885 The Origin of the Spark

The goods supplied by the System had always been high in quality.

The Qi Restoration Potion proved to be worth as much as it was sold in the Grand Bazaar.

In fact, Ves could even argue that they were underpriced relative to the value they could provide when they were used at the best possible moments!

Just one of them was already enough to restore about 80 percent of his Spirituality!

Not only did he get refreshed, but many of his injuries also healed at an accelerated pace!

What was even better was that Blinky also benefited from the effects of the potion. After all, the companion spirit still existed as a semi-autonomous extension of Ves.

If he knew that the Qi Restoration Potion had been so powerful, he would have bought them years ago! He regretted once again that had been ignoring the potential benefits of consumables sold in the Infinite Bazaar for so long.

Ves already planned to buy a few more of these handy potions if he managed to get through this tribulation event. They were just too powerful and useful for him to ignore their existence any further!

It would have been even better if he was able to get a hold of the production method. He could either brew the potions himself, or hand the information over to the T Institute in order to research how to mass produce them in-house.

However, Ves could think about that later. He still had to beat the opponent in front before he could have the luxury to think about the future.

Though the Flower Parasol kept him shaded from the harsh light radiated by the clone of the Subjugation King, he knew that it would not be able to keep this up forever. The artifact was too 'young' and underdeveloped to withstand so much energy.

Ves thought about entering into the fray again, but he had a strong feeling that he would just get smacked away again!

The Subjugation King truly wasn't playing around anymore. The hull sections closest to his powerful clone had already started to disintegrate. The tyrannical light encountered a bit of resistance when it struck transphasic alloys, but still managed to eat away at the hull of the dreadnought at a slightly slower rate than normal.

Ves could not imagine what it would be like if he tried to approach the giant light source!

The inverse-square law applied in this situation as well. The lower the distance, the greater the pressure he needed to bear. He was pretty sure that not even the Flower Parasol would be able to last under all of that concentration light!

"This is not a fight that can be won through brawling. We need to overpower our adversary in a better way."

How?

Ranged attacks were unlikely to accomplish anything. The Dreadfire Legion had continued to provide fire support at a distance, yet their barrage of energy beams, high-yield missiles and kinetic projectiles weakened as soon as they became exposed to a high enough concentration of light.

By the time the attacks struck the Subjugation King, they had weakened to such an extent that they failed to inflict any meaningful harm to the entity.

Ves doubted that the results would be better if Caramond went back to empowering his Dreadfire Legion. Relying on quantity had already proven to be ineffective against an extremely powerful cultivator.

The only way he could pass the final test of the Subjugation King was to concentrate a lot more power than he had managed to harness just before.

So long as Blinky was able to summon a full fire energy raiment that covered up his entire true body, the protection might be able to shield Ves and his partners from the harsh light.

What then?

Ves doubted that the clone of the Subjugation King would simply float around and allow himself to get hit.

"It's not enough."

The Qi Restoration Potion may have refreshed him, but it did not dramatically raise his capabilities. The strength gap between himself and the clone of the God King had grown even wider now that the latter employed one of his best elements.

Ves needed to break the game once again. There was no way he could win this bout by relying on his previous methods.

"Energy. It all comes down to energy."

The clone of the Subjugation King not only had a lot more energy at his disposal, but also utilized it in a proficient manner.

Ves and his partners fared worse in both areas. They were all working on borrowed energy to begin with. The only effective way they could achieve better results was to leverage more energy.

He grimaced. Blinky had been doing a great job at channeling lots of fire energy generated by the Spark Reactor, but his companion spirit was still far from reaching the level of a True God.

The Star Cat had grown considerably throughout this exhausting fight, but he still had a lot more to go before he could ever become an equal to the clone.

What else could they accomplish?

Ves was very cognizant that the merciless light was continuing to break the hull of the Dominion of Man with each second that passed. He needed to take action soon, or else the dreadnought would snap in half because the God King managed to disintegrate kilometers worth of hull structure!

He only had one promising solution in mind.

To be honest, he had tried to ignore it as much as possible. The implications were far too great and he was afraid that his idea would cause the downfall of the Dominion of Man.

Unfortunately, Ves was out of any other ideas, so he could only proceed with what he had on his mind.

He backed away and approached one of the intact maintenance hatches that was built into the side of the enormous hull.

The recessed placement of the hatch allowed it to escape much of the devastation that had been wrought on this side of the dreadnought. Ves used his fingers to access the control panel, and felt relieved that it was still operational.

Ves did not bother to input a request to open the hatch or anything. Instead, he used the projected interface to type up a quick plan and hoped that the Brain Trust would be smart enough to inform Dread Captain Volkert Argile.

Only a few seconds passed before Ves felt the Rubicon Spatial Transfer System attempt to lock onto his body.

The powerful system clearly struggled to do so under the heavy interfere generated by the clone of the God King, but Ves had backed off far away enough to successfully cross the Rubicon.

Ves blinked as he found himself standing directly before the command seat of the captain of the Dominion of Man.

A lot of changes had taken place since he last visited this impressive area. One of the most notable changes was how the vast majority of officers and specialists had formed Blood Pacts with the dreadnought.

Volkert Argile was the most defining example of a fleeter who had traded his oaths to the Red Fleet for eternal servitude to the living warship!

Out of all of the soldiers equipped with Dread Armor that Ves had seen today, no one else aside from the Dread Captain radiated so many illusionary flames!

This was not the only notable sight in this chamber.

Far behind the dread captain, the tall and imposing artwork that bore the same name of the dreadnought shone with the light of humanity.

Though the recent transformation had added an even stronger charm to this evocative masterwork, the mood among the crew was a lot more pessimistic.

Few people had any hope left that they would survive this wave. Many of them were already thinking about activating all of the gun turrets if they had a clear shot of the arrogant clone of the God King.

Some of the officers even believed it was better to skip this step and go straight to employing the weapons of mass destruction that a flagship of the Red Fleet definitely held in reserve!

God King or not, there was no way that the clone would be able to remain so composed after the Dominion of Man forcibly teleported a dozen antimatter bombs into his alien face!

While doing so would violate the unwritten rules of the ongoing ritual, the crew of the damaged dreadnought no longer thought about earning a huge payoff anymore. The survival of their proud flagship trumped every other priority!

Not even the orders issued by high command could sway them from their determination to save their vessel!

This was probably why Dread Captain Argile made the risky move to directly teleport Ves to the command center. The fleetier was reluctant to activate his 'final resort'.

"Explain your plan as quickly as possible. Time is of the essence." Dread Captain Argile spoke with fire in his breath.

"I need access to the interior of the Spark Reactor." Ves straightforwardly explained. "I'm not sure how much you know about it, but we are not even close to tapping the full potential of the actual power source of the Dominion of Man. We have merely been taking advantage of the passive radiation of this dormant source. Let me attempt to wake it up or bestow an actual consciousness to it. Once it has gained enough awareness to understand that his ship is in danger, we can point it in the direction of the lightning manifestation."

Though the proposal sounded good, the dread captain immediately shook his head.

"No. Your logic is sound, but it is based on limited information. I am aware of what you are referring to, but you do not understand the danger of what you speak. That 'power source' is far more dangerous than you think! There are good reasons why we have kept it dormant and locked inside an overengineered Spark Reactor!"

Ves wanted to smack his palm on his face. "This is no time for secrets, captain! Have you looked what I have done for everyone?! After all I have done to damage our current adversary, I think I deserve to know what is making you all so spooked about that powerful entity that is powering your ship! Why are you trying to maintain secrecy anyway when you have already broken some of your oaths? This is bigger than the Red Fleet!"

The dread captain clearly did not wish to divulge sensitive information to a person who was technically an outsider, but pragmatism ultimately gained the upper hand.

The man let out a sigh. "Very well. I am not privy to the full context, and there is not enough time to explain what little I am aware of. I have only become aware of these secrets relatively recently. Since you are already familiar with the existence of the Five Scrolls Compact, I can tell you that the subject locked inside the Spark Reactor is a powerful derivative of the Fire Scroll."

"The same Sacred Scroll that ended up in the hands of the Big Two, am I correct?"

Volkert Argile nodded. "That is so. I cannot tell you how the experts of the Common Fleet Alliance managed to do it, but they have manipulated the Fire Scroll into producing a number of powerful beings that we have taken to calling Fire Elementals. This label in itself is rather misleading. According to our research, their natures are far more troubling than they appear. We are not entirely certain about this, but our experts have managed to uncover that they are diminished clones or 'offspring' from an extremely powerful cultivator that existed in antiquity. Can you guess the identity of this master of the fire element?"

The answer was not immediately obvious, but Ves already knew enough about the Sacred Scrolls to come up with an answer.

"Are you saying that... the Fire Elemental is a clone of the original creator of the Fire Scroll!"

"Exactly! Do you understand now how dangerous it is to 'wake it up', as you have suggested?!"

Though Ves was shocked by this revelation, he was not as stunned as he should have been.

Perhaps there was a part of him that had already guessed at the truth.

"We don't have any other choice, captain. Whatever threat this Fire Elemental poses, I doubt it would truly try to wipe out red humanity. Anything is better than kneeling to the Subjugation King at this point! Besides, I don't think the Fire Elemental will go out of control. I think I have a way of limiting its autonomy."

"How?"

Chapter 5886 Lighting the Spark

Ves shouldn't have been surprised that the living spark turned out to be a clone of the maker of the Fire Scroll.

He was a bit amazed at how the fleeters did not destroy this insanely dangerous threat, but instead kept it dormant while using it as a power source for their experimental dreadnoughts.

This sounded as stupid as Ves capturing an old enemy like the Saint Jeremiah Gauge, putting him in a coma before stuffing him in the power reactor of the First Sword!

Sure, Ves might be able to make the expert swordsman mech extremely powerful as a result, but a stunt like this was just begging to trigger a calamity as soon as a dreadnought suffered an unfortunate accident!

The fleeters must have been really desperate to develop a direct counter to god mechs. There was no other justification for them to override their own rules and principles and toy with the legacy of one of the most dangerous cultivators that humanity had indirectly fought against.

Still, it was exactly because the fleeters had been crazy enough to employ a dormant Fire Elemental as a power source that Ves saw a viable pathway towards victory!

The building blocks of his plan became more concrete as he learned a number of vital secrets from the dread captain.

Ves was pretty sure that not even the captain of a dreadnought was never supposed to know this much. He figured that Volkert Argile remained in contact with high command and learned a lot of secrets from his father.

In any case, Ves gained enough relevant information to make his plan actionable. His confidence level had risen now that he knew he was working with! The living spark was no longer a complete unknown to him anymore.

"Let me execute my new plan." He urged the captain. "I know it sounds dangerous, but times have changed. We have entered a new galaxy and a new age. The threats of the past have lost much of their relevance. Besides, if my plan works out according to my expectations, the Fire Elemental won't go rogue as long as the right conditions are met."

Dread Captain Argile clearly struggled to make his decision. The fire energy coursing through his body strongly urged him to agree, but he was too much of a professional to let that dictate his verdict.

The command center shook. A power generator had just blown up despite all of the hasty measures employed by the engineers to limit the damage.

That prompted the fleetier to make a decision that had the potential to change the history of the Dominion of Man and human civilization in the Red Ocean!

"Despite all of the factors that we have failed to account for, you have proven yourself to be credible, loyal and knowledgeable enough to earn our trust once more. Since there is still a chance for the Dominion of Man to rise to greatness, we are willing to give you access to the interior of the Spark Reactor to do what is necessary. Do not make me regret my decision."

Ves grinned in response. "Thank you! Let's get into action!"

The Rubicon soon teleported him to the entrance of the chamber that held the massive Spark Reactor. The teleportation system wasn't able to bring him any close as the entire space was specifically shielded against hostile intrusions.

The guards and engineers assigned to the Spark Reactor clearly received orders to let him through. The gate opened right away, allowing Ves to speedily get closer.

The fire energy radiating from the Spark Reactor was monstrous!

Even though the Spark Reactor made sure to channel much of the output in a controlled fashion, it still wasn't easy for Ves to get so close to the Fire Elemental.

There was still hundreds of meters separating him from this dormant and mindless entity!

Fortunately, the engineers who had been privy to some of the more obscure secrets of the Spark Reactor had prepared a stopgap solution to this problem.

"Please change to this specialized isolation suit, professor. It will prevent your body from spontaneously combusting as you enter the shell of the Spark Reactor."

Ves changed out of his damaged Unending Regalia and into the thick isolation suit right away. He looked almost identical to all of the other engineers, but he didn't care because he felt a lot more relief!

The suit actually worked!

"How long will it last once I get close to the Fire Elemental?" Ves straightforwardly asked.

"5 minutes or less. This is only a theoretical calculation as no man has ever attempted to approach the subject while wearing an isolation suit. We have only ever manipulated the subject by remote."

"Five minutes should be enough. I don't want to give that alien bastard enough time to shine his destructive light deeper into the hull of this ship." Ves said. "Is there anything else that I should know before I get inside?"

"You are responsible for your own safety, Professor Larkinson. None of us are able to accompany you. If you exceed your safety limitations and immolate yourself, then do not expect us to rescue you. If there are enough indications that the Fire Elemental has gone rogue, then we will eject the

Spark Reactor from this vessel and saturate it with as many antimatter bombs and other highly destructive weapons."

"Understood."

Ves did not really feel very nervous despite learning that the crew of the Dominion of Man was ready to abandon the Spark Reactor wholesale if anything seriously went wrong.

If he wanted to survive, he just had to pull off his plan without fumbling along the way.

Entering the Spark Reactor was a big deal. The dark metal alloys used to house the subject were insanely tough and resistant to heat. It took time to slowly open the gates that led to the central compartment.

Once Ves managed to pass through the final entrance, he entered a hollow chamber that contained many details that he would love to study in great depth if he had the luxury of time.

Unfortunately, the rampaging clone of the Subjugation King forced him to set aside these impulses and behold the source of all of the fire energy!

The isolation suit had to work overtime to prevent much of the heat and fire energy from cooking Ves alive!

Knowing that he was working on a time limit, Ves pushed himself forward and came into close proximity to a transparent 'egg' that acted like a container to the supposed Fire Elemental.

The darkened visor of his isolation suit gave Ves a clear enough view of the entity in question.

It was difficult to believe that a being so powerful lacked any sort of consciousness. It was a contradictory existence.

At this time, Ves wanted to bring the Fire Elemental to life.

"Blinky. I know it is dangerous, but I need you to approach this fellow and inject him with my life energy. It will be dangerous, but you should be able to tolerate exposure long enough to complete your mission."

"Mrow..."

"Caramond, I need you to control the fire energy and commune with the Fire Elemental as it gains an actual consciousness. This entire gambit hinges on your ability to keep this entity under control and preferably under your heel.

"According to the dread captain, the CFA has limited experience with Fire Elementals that somehow gained a wisp of consciousness. What happened was that a semblance of the tyrannical personality of the original creator of the Fire Scroll always emerged. The Fire Elementals then proceeded to do whatever it took to revive the original creator in full."

This doomsday scenario frightened the Big Two out of their wits!

Ves was lucky that attitudes towards the Five Scrolls Compact and everything related to it had mellowed out in the Red Ocean.

He had no doubt that there were fleeters who secretly hoped to revive the progenitor of the Fire Scrolls in the hope that he would be human enough to protect red humanity against their alien opponents.

That did not sit well with Ves. The return of an ancient power would negate all of the progress that modern humanity had attained over so many millenia.

Besides, Ves never believed that red humanity needed to surrender to any god in order to save itself. Humans needed to become strong enough to save them from their own problems!

This was the entire point of his design philosophy. Ves wanted to make ordinary humans strong enough to harness the power of gods for themselves!

Hopefully, his latest gambit would facilitate his noble goal.

"Go." Ves said before pressing a button on a nearby control panel.

"Mrow!"

The combined form of Blinky and Caramond dashed out of Ves' head and passed through the gap that appeared on the transparent shell.

The heat had become a lot more overbearing at this distance! They had come so close to center of the Fire Elemental's domain that they would have gotten burned if not for Caramond's active Bloodfire Pact!

Even so, Blinky was literally roasting due to the intense exposure to so much concentrated fire energy!

The companion spirit had attempted to shield himself by conjuring up multiple layers of protective barriers, but they burned up so quickly that they only bought him a fraction of a second in total!

Fortunately, he moved quickly enough to get close, disgorge a concentrated spray of life energy, and dart back to Ves right afterwards!

"Mrowwww!"

While Blinky sheltered inside Ves' head, Caramond had separated from the companion spirit and floated before the Fire Elemental as the mysterious entity started to show signs of life.

In truth, much of the life energy released by Blinky had burned up before it reached the powerful spark.

Only a minute amount of Ves' life energy managed to reach the Fire Elemental in the end, and it was questionable whether it had any opportunity to take effect.

What Ves did not expect was for the Fire Elemental to open his burning eyes right away.

Ves recoiled and quickly beat a retreat as he felt as if his entire mind and Spirituality had been seared by powerful lasers!

There was no reason for him to stick around anymore. Ves quickly passed through the exit and tried to make his way out of the Spark Reactor as soon as possible.

He maintained just enough awareness to pay attention to what was happening inside the central chamber.

The Spark Reactor suddenly shook! The temperature behind the fleeing Ves had spiked, so much so that he felt as if his back had just gotten a nasty sunburn!

It turned out that the Fire Elemental had not only woken up, but also shattered the transparent cage before releasing a destructive spray of fire inside the central chamber!

Meanwhile, the revived entity rapidly started to gain an actual consciousness, one that did not feel anything like a fresh and newborn entity, but one that possessed such an enormous precipitation of time that he must have lived for eons!

"Damn, so it is true!"

Ves kept running away as fast as possible as the Fire Elemental began to alter the expression of his domain. More and more of the Spark Reactor heated up to the point where actual flames started to appear where they shouldn't!

Aside from that, a mixture of overwhelming emotions overtook the entity that had been hijacked by the splinter consciousness of an ancient cultivator of supreme power!

The entity must definitely feel pissed that none of his plans for the Fire Scrolls worked out and that the CFA actually had the temerity to exploit one of his diminished clones as a power source of all things!

"C'mon! Make this work!"

The power generated by the Fire Elemental escalated so rapidly that it seemed that the revived god was on the verge of blasting the center of the Dominion of Man with a fireblast of untold magnitude!

Yet despite all of this danger, the manifestation of Caramond strangely remained unharmed... for the most part.

"Calm yourself. We did not bring you to life only for you to burn this beautiful vessel. There is an alien upstairs that has been trying to kill and enslave us all. We must join hands to repel this threat and preserve the future of the human race. Will you join me in this sacred mission?"

The evolved Fire Elemental grew even angrier! It was clear that the entity had no intention of joining hands with Caramond!

Fortunately, Ves already took this into account. There was one more card that Caramond could play.

"If you do not agree to serve humanity on a voluntary basis, then I have no choice but to force you to serve us by force!"

The Fire Elemental had actually become intelligent enough to express incredulity at Caramond.

The gap in power between the two was so massive that there was no way Caramond could force the Fire Elemental into obedience!

At least that was the case on the surface.

Caramond slowly smirked as he stimulated the powerful spiritual bond that formed the basis of his Bloodfire Pact.

"We are connected, you and I. Do you understand what this means? It means that I can transfer the faith that red humanity has invested in me to you! You may have gained the power of a god, but if there is one weakness your kind possesses, it is that you are susceptible to the beliefs of the masses!"

The Fire Elemental widened his powerful eyes. He wanted to blast Caramond right away, but the ancestral spirit had already begun to channel a huge chunk of the faith energy derived from the worship of trillions upon trillions of humans across the new frontier!

The huge influx of faith in human supremacy and the ideals of Supreme Marshal Caramond Perle slammed into the Fire Elemental like a rocket!

If the revived entity was at a more mature and developed state, then he would have been able to resist the influx of so much 'unwanted' faith.

Unfortunately, the Fire Elemental had just woken up a short time ago. The consciousness of the original creator of the Fire Scroll hardly had any time to build up a complete personality, so the entity was hardly able to protect himself from all of the earnest faith and wishes of a human civilization that was much different from the one that existed during his own era!

A silent scream erupted from the Spark Reactor!

It was so shocking and disruptive that even the clone of the Subjugation King had paused in his attempt to tear through the dreadnought!

"#\$&\$?"

"WHAT... HAVE YOU DONE?"

Chapter 5887 Reshape Reality

The Fire Elemental could rightfully be regarded as one of the most dangerous threats in the Red Ocean.

Few people had the right to know the secret behind the power of a dreadnought. There were good reasons why these gigantic vessels displayed a level of combat effectiveness that was far above other battleships, and it was not just due to their greater size!

Energy was the most fundamental parameter that determined the combat power of a soldier or a war weapon. It was the main factor that separated mechs between third-class, second-class and first-class.

It had been an inspired idea to utilize mindless Fire Elementals as the primary power source of dreadnoughts. They not only seemed to output a huge amount of heat just by existing, but also generated a large amount of fire-attributed E-energy.

Back during the Age of Mechs, the Fire Elementals already presented a huge risk to the security and the continuation of modern human civilization.

Now that red humanity had entered the Age of Dawn, that risk became magnified due to the amplifying influence of E energy radiation.

Every Fire Elemental not only fed off E energy radiation, but also possessed the ability to spread their domain through it with much greater ease, allowing them to borrow the power of heaven to empower each of their actions.

The Red Fleet had become a lot more ambivalent towards the Fire Elementals for that reason.

Their considerable boost in effectiveness came paired with vastly greater danger should the entities in question ever wake up and pose a threat to human society.

These fears were not overblown. Back when the CFA initially experimented with Fire Elementals, they found out the hard way that each of these True God-level entities had been hardwired into spawning a fraction of the consciousness of the creator of the Fire Scroll.

This mysterious creator posed such an existential threat towards the CFA and everything that modern human civilization stood for that every 'awakened' Fire Elemental had turned into a terror!

The continued use of dreadnoughts and their associated Spark Reactors had been subject to a huge amount of debate behind closed doors.

While the fleeters had reluctantly decided that they had no luxury to refuse the power of dreadnoughts during times of turmoil, one of the rules that they had set for themselves was that they would absolutely not do anything to risk the revival of any of the so-called immortal gods!

In fact, one of the most important rules adopted by the Red Fleet was that any experimentation on the Fire Elementals had become taboo!

Perhaps the fleeters used to have the luxury to do so under more secure and controlled circumstances in the old galaxy, but those conditions no longer applied in the Red Ocean!

It was not an exaggeration to say that a single wrong experiment could very well lead to the total erasure of all red humans!

It would be beyond ironic for the humans in the Red Ocean to be responsible for their own extinction as opposed to getting defeated by their alien foes.

None of these fleeters had any clue that Ves had been crazy enough to risk the destruction of all humanity in the dwarf galaxy on this day.

It helped that Ves hadn't been aware of the existence of this new taboo, but that was no excuse for him to even think about chasing a fantastical outcome at the cost of risking the entirety of red humanity!

Ves had no right to put everyone's lives and freedom at risk, but he did it anyway because he was utterly convinced that this extreme measure was necessary.

His earlier confrontation against the Subjugation King had only given him a hint of the immense power of this alien God King, but that was already enough for him to understand why the tier 1 galactic citizens were so spooked by this extragalactic threat!

It was exactly because of the existential threat posed by the Subjugation King that Ves went through with this insane plan!

As he desperately ran outside the Spark Reactor, alarms began to ring throughout the entire chamber that held the Spark Reactor.

The heat radiating from the center of the Spark Reactor had spiked! More fire energy than ever before blasted from the awakened Fire Elemental, causing the entire dreadnought to become hotter and more empowered than any previous point in her relatively short history!

Additional power was normally helpful.

The Dread Marines operating outside the hull of the Dominion of Man heavily relied on the output of the Spark Reactor to empower their hyper weapons and pose a slightly greater threat against god-like beings.

Yet few fleeters welcomed this change. No matter whether they were aware of what truly powered the Spark Reactor, each of them had become affected by the malice radiating from the Fire Elemental's expanding domain!

It was rather amazing at what Ves managed to do by injecting only a fraction of his life energy into the previously dormant entity.

The Fire Elemental only needed a single spark of life to kickstart the automated process that rapidly turned him into a vessel that accommodated a shard of the mythical creator of the Fire Scroll!

If everything unfolded without any other interfering factors, then Ves would have bet that the angry Fire Elemental engulfed the Dominion of Man in an unstoppable conflagration!

One of the reasons why Ves tried to run so quickly out of the Spark Reactor was because he wanted the Rubicon Spatial Transfer System to lock onto his body and teleport him far away.

However, the interference produced by the rapidly strengthening Fire Elemental made it impossible for the Rubicon to establish a stable lock on Ves or any of the personnel that was stationed close to the Spark Reactor.

There had been a moment of time where Ves briefly felt the specter of death catching up to him. His intuition screamed that he was about to get blasted by such a strong flame that not even his true body would be able to hold out for long!

Yet before that critical moment came to pass, Caramond had launched an attack on the awakening Fire Elemental.

Though the recent fighting had caused Caramond's transition into a True God to be set back, that did not diminish the faith he had access to at all. It had only increased due to the machinations of the Red Two and the first-rate superstates!

As red humanity spontaneously began to celebrate a brand new holiday that celebrated the legacy and the accomplishments of Supreme Marshal Caramond Perle, a huge amount of faith poured into the ancestral spirit.

Normally, it should never have been possible to redirect all of that faith to a completely different True God that arguably possessed principles that were almost completely opposite to that of the Supreme Marshal!

It helped that the Dominion of Man was one of the strongest and most iconic symbols of human supremacy. The fleeters had always been strong believers of the power of 'ordinary' humans, and there was nothing that represented their power better than a dreadnought that fielded the strongest infantry force in the Red Ocean!

Yet because the Bloodfire Pact merged Caramond together with the Dominion of Man, a vulnerability opened up where faith in one also translated into faith in the other!

It helped that the Dominion of Man was one of the strongest and most iconic symbols of human supremacy. The fleeters had always been strong believers of the power of 'ordinary' humans, and there was nothing that represented their power better than a dreadnought that fielded the strongest infantry force in the Red Ocean!

What was a bit more puzzling was how the Fire Elemental tied into this relationship. His association with the Dominion of Man was not that strong since he existed as a separate entity.

However, the Fire Elemental had served as a core part of the Dominion of Man since her inception. From a symbolic standpoint, the entity was undeniably related to the dreadnought in question.

So long as this symbolic relationship still existed, the Fire Elemental was still tied to the massive warship, which meant his fate remained tied with that of the vessel that he had been a part of shortly after his creation!

The result of all of this was that the Fire Elemental had no chance of evading the huge influx of faith that had been channeled in his direction!

As Ves continued to pass through numerous gates in order to build up more distance between himself and the volatile Spark Reactor, his spiritual senses had practically gone crazy as reality itself seemed to distort behind his back!

The clash of domains, wills and faith had resulted in a lot of freaky phenomena that Ves did not want to explore too closely!

All he could perceive was that the Fire Elemental tried to do his best to defend his fragile personality that had only just been born or revived.

Unfortunately, Caramond never intended for the extremely dangerous shard of the creator of the Fire Scroll to mature his personality and develop the strength to fend off this attack.

The 'faith attack' was not impossible to defend against. The people of the Red Ocean might be relatively united in their heartfelt belief in the supremacy of modern humanity, but their population was only a fraction of their brothers and sisters back in the Milky Way.

The vast majority of red humans were not that strong either. Practically none of them had engaged in any sort of active cultivation, which meant that their faith was so weak that it could easily be missed, especially when none of them engaged in any proper prayer or religious ceremonies.

Even so, the faith of all of the humans in the Red Ocean was nothing to scoff at either. If there was one strength that humanity had acquired, it was the pride and confidence that their scrappy race could overcome all alien adversaries!

As all of these beliefs hammered the Fire Elemental like a trillion projectiles, the weak and debilitated True God ultimately had no chance of standing his ground!

The Fire Elemental suffered one of the worst nightmares that a deity could suffer. He had become vulnerable to the diverging beliefs of his own 'worshippers'!

The severe discordance between his own principles and the beliefs of so many red humans ultimately forced the personality of the Fire Elemental to break and rewrite itself into a more compatible form!

The essential values, principles and the memories that shaped the creator of the Fire Scroll practically got overridden by a new set of traits that were much more characteristic of Caramond Perle!

Naturally, the Fire Elemental did not go down without a fight. An invisible struggle had already broken out between him and Caramond. They fought on an unseen battlefield where faith and power collided against each other, causing the fabric of reality to ripple in unpredictable ways.

A few components surrounding the Spark Reactor broke and malfunctioned due to the shockwaves of this invisible clash!

If not for the fact that the Dominion of Man was insanely robust and well-designed, the Spark Reactor and the surrounding systems would have exhibited a lot more malfunctions!

Fortunately, this clash lasted relatively briefly. Scarcely a minute had gone by when reality settled into calm again.

The Fire Elemental's chances of gaining upper hand had steadily diminished as the faith attack sapped his resistance.

Once all of the beliefs from ordinary humans started to rewrite aspects of himself, more and more of himself became aligned with red humanity!

Though there were still a few deep-rooted parts of the Fire Elemental that resisted the faith attack a lot better, a majority of the entity's very personality and essence ultimately surrendered to the will of the people!

This had many far-reaching consequences!

The Fire Elemental had lost much of his aggression and began to alter in shape.

Though there was still a bitter core of the Fire Elemental that refused to give up the struggle to restore the consciousness of an immortal god, the constant influx of faith energy continued to suppress these destructive impulses.

This subsequently created enough room for the Fire Elemental to change into a form that was more reflective of beliefs of so many humans.

Chapter 5888 The Wrath of Humanity

A short time after Fire Elemental had undergone a radical transformation, Ves teleported back up to the surface of the Dominion of Man.

The entire side had become almost unrecognizable compared to its previous state. The fighting that took place above the surface had wrecked so much hull plating, gun turrets and other exterior modules that the entire site resembled a metallic wasteland.

If not for the fact that the Spark Reactor was generating an excess amount of fire energy that inevitably leaked out of the hull, the entire place would have looked lifeless and desolate.

Of all of the tribulation manifestations that had managed to tear up the precious dreadnought, none inflicted as much damage as the clone of the Subjugation King.

The powerful entity had done nothing but shine a harsh light that disintegrated and broke down everything it touched. Energy barriers, bulkheads and other objects never lasted for long.

It was an omnidirectional attack that even began to break down the armor of Dread Marines who had been trying to bombard the implacable alien foe from a distance!

The consequences of letting the clone shine his damaging light onto dreadnought was rather devastating.

Not only had a lot of intact modules and armor plating on this side of the Dominion of Man begun to malfunction and break down, but the radiant enemy had also carved a deep bowl-shaped hole directly underneath his floating position!

The overall shape of the Dominion of Man resembled a sausage. Right now, one of her sides not only looked like it had been fried, but a certain animal had also taken a bite out of the sausage!

The good news was that the Dominion of Man was so large and resilient that the clone of the God King failed to breach too deep into the citadel. The enormous hull was not in danger of snapping into two separate pieces, but it was clear that the vessel could not afford to exert too much stress onto her damaged structure.

Though the damage to the warship was horrendous, Ves knew enough about the design of the Dominion of Man that she managed to retain much of her combat effectiveness.

So what if one of her sides got chewed up rather badly? She still had other sides that retained most of their functionality!

The dreadnought simply had to take care to not show her injured side to any threats. Ves was sure that the damage control teams and the automated repair systems would be able to close a lot of gaps and repair a lot of salvageable and partially damaged components.

However, very few of these measures could be undertaken while the clone of the Subjugation King continued to shine like a miniature star. The constancy of his hostile light only spread further destruction. Stopping him had become a high priority, especially when he had been left unattended for such a long time.

"#\$@&&."

"YOU HAVE RETURNED... AFTER YOU HAVE WOKEN UP A POWERFUL BEING. IT IS BOTH FASCINATING AND ABHORRENT TO SEE WHAT YOU HAVE WROUGHT. IT IS CLEAR THAT A VALUED SLAVE SUCH AS YOURSELF IS IN DIRE NEED OF REEDUCATION—"

"—SHUT UP, YOU THREE-EYED BASTARD!" Ves shouted back! "I am sick and tired of your nonsense. I am not a slave, and neither is the rest of humanity. It is high time for you to get beaten like all of the other aliens that thought to challenge the human race!"

Despite the rising heat, the Subjugation King still had the temerity to express contempt at Ves.

"#\$&\$#@."

"YOUR LATEST ACTIONS HAS MADE YOU OVERCONFIDENT. RAW POWER IS NOT ENOUGH TO BREAK MY CHAINS. MANY SLAVES HAVE TRIED AND FAILED. YOU ARE NO DIFFERENT. YOUR SLAVE SPECIES IS TOO PRIMITIVE TO MASTER THE FINER INTRICACIES OF THE POWER THAT THE GREAT LIGHTHOUSE HAS GRACIOUSLY IF UNDESERVINGLY BESTOWED UPON YOUR MINISCULE GALAXY."

Ves sneered at the arrogant alien bastard. "I am going to make you eat your words. We are not primitive! It is you who is the primitive around here! I am better than you, and the human race is

much more enlightened than a race who only thinks about enslaving and killing others. I will not falter today, because I have gained a new ally that will help me beat you until your manifestation explodes in my hands. Furia, show this alien the wrath of red humanity!"

As Ves began to remove his Unending Regalia and unfold his strengthened true body, another major development occurred.

Much of the fire energy that pumped out of the Spark Reactor began to converge and concentrate behind Ves' back!

They briefly took the form of burning wings, their heat so high that they should have burned Ves as well as the nearby hull structure due to the excessive concentration of fire energy.

Yet despite concentrating so much fire energy than what Blinky had ever managed during the previous phases of this confrontation, the majestic and awe-inspiring fire wings did not inflict any damage to the dreadnought or those who fought on her behalf!

This was an indication of excellent control. The fact that the fire energy had come under the control of a conscious and powerful fire cultivator apparently made a huge difference!

The wings did not last forever. The concentration of fire energy continued to grow until the flaming manifestation slowly detached from Ves.

The wings began to compress and adopt a human-like shape.

Unlike the originally masculine Fire Elemental, the shape he had adopted after getting flooded with an excessive amount of human faith was distinctly feminine in appearance!

The fire lady clearly retained a lot of common traits of her original incarnation, but also showed undeniable signs of change.

Much of the people who had supplied their faith energy to Caramond had adopted the ancient custom of calling ships in a feminine fashion.

Though the practice was ceremonial at most, so many people called dreadnoughts like the Dominion of Man as 'she' that the Fire Elemental had become feminine as well!

That was not all. While the Fire Elemental had retained the immense anger of her original personality, her new values and principles caused her fiery emotions to be directed away from the humans who rebelled against the immortal gods!

From the moment of her 'awakening', the faith-forged Fire Elemental had assumed an entirely different mission and purpose in life!

As her manifestation radiated so much heat and passion that her blazing light had pushed back the harsh light of the alien tyrant, the new arrival proudly announced her existence to the new frontier!

"I AM FURIA! I AM THE WRATH OF THE RED HUMANITY! NO ALIEN IS ALLOWED TO DESECRATE MY SHIP ANY LONGER!"

After Furia made her declaration, she directed one more hateful glare at the clone of the God King before breaking apart!

As much as Furia wanted to act on the wrath that so many fleeters held towards the powerful alien, she was willing to respect the rules of the ritualistic combat setting.

The concentrated fire energies that previously made up her body did not dissipate.

Instead, they split into two and went on to empower two entirely different combatants.

The Dreadfire Legion that had largely remained irrelevant since the 9th wave began suddenly gained a huge infusion of fire energy!

Each Dread Marine became infused with much more power than before. As they fired their ranged weapons at their target, they found that the fire energies not only clung to their attacks a lot more effectively than before, but also managed to overcome the alien's defenses and inflict real damage, however small!

Hundreds of thousands of surviving and combat capable Dread Marine became buoyed by this discovery. They renewed their assault and began to exert real pressure on the clone of the Subjugation King!

What happened to Ves was even more dramatic.

So much deadly but also friendly fire energy had voluntarily put themselves under Ves and Blinky's command.

"ARISE, MY PROGENITOR, AND USE THE POWER BESTOWED BY HUMANITY TO SLAY THIS ALIEN FIEND!"

The gigantic form of Ves began to get engulfed by fire energy that was generated and kept under control by an actual True God this time.

Ves found it strange how pliable the fire energy had become, but he did not let that distract him from constructing a bigger, better and stronger raiment!

The massive boost in control and the complete lack of resistance allowed Ves to go much further with this than before.

The fire energy longer inflicted any strain, allowing to remain clear-headed enough to work out the finer details of his simulated equipment.

If Ves previously looked like a phase lord, now he looked like a mech forged out of fire.

Taller than a typical mech but shorter than a juggernaut, the fireclad Ves resembled a mechanical demon that had come straight out of hell.

The thick armor system that surrounded his body adopted an aesthetic that was both functional but also stylish.

Ves couldn't resist the urge to make her contours sharper and more intimidating. He also added a horn on the head of his fire energy raiment.

As for armaments, he decided to copy the Mars once again. He had always regarded it as his strongest mech, though his ownership had become a topic of contention nowadays.

Regardless, he had long associated the ace mech and its pilot with strength, so it was much easier for him to form and empower the simulated ARCEUS System, the shoulder-mounted missile launchers, the transphasic axe and the transphasic shotgun.

In order to ensure they possessed the penetration power required to beat up his opponent, he willingly spat out a large glob of blood that went on to add transphasic properties to his fire energy equipment.

As Ves completely wrapped himself up with Furia's blazing power, his passion began to ignite as well!

It was difficult for him to maintain a cool head while he became immersed in the transformed Fire Elemental's absolute loathing towards the Subjugation King!

Now that he had assumed his most powerful fighting form to date, Ves pointed the transphasic shotgun straight at the powerful clone!

"BURN!"

A powerful blast erupted from the simulated shotgun!

The weapon ejected a powerful concentration of transphasic fire energy that struck the clone on the chest!

The concentrated fire energy exploded upon impact, producing enough force to launch the clone backwards while interrupting his lightshow!

A large and obvious hole appeared on the chest as the singular attack had successfully breached the exoskeleton of the lightning manifestation!

Multiple beams of fire energy struck the clone's body at various points.

While none of the attacks were as powerful as the first strike, they struck with such heat and potency that they disrupted the clone's moves.

A giant flaming comet soon slammed into the staggered clone!

Though the Subjugation King had raised a bone spike to block a fiery axe strike, the weapon struck with so much power and momentum that it had broken through this hasty defense and chopped off the other limb!

A second explosion of tribulation energies blasted both combatants away from each other, but Ves already expected it as he allowed his ARCEUS System as well as his missile launchers to open fire on the injured clone!

Though the tribulation manifestation had not lost all of his combat effectiveness, the unrelenting offensive from Ves never gave the alien a chance to form a proper countermeasure!

While the fire beams unleashed by the ARCEUS System continued to keep the alien off-balance, the barrage of transphasic fire energy missiles exploded against the clone's body, weakening and shattering even more exoskeleton pieces!

Ves in Mars raiment had already closed in just enough to let loose another powerful blast of his shotgun!

This time, the storm of transphasic pellets punched through the weakened and exposed body, inflicting plenty of injuries that further weakened the alien's body!

This bought plenty of time for Ves to close in and chop his powerful transphasic fire energy axe onto the smug and arrogant head of his target!

"HUMANITY SHALL ALWAYS VANQUISH AGAINST THE ALIEN!"

The axe chopped the head right down the middle and ultimately sank into the upper chest.

Shortly after Ves had inflicted this fatal strike, the entire body of the clone began to crackle with tribulation lightning before exploding with far greater force than before!

Chapter 5889 Ves the Defender

Ves had become so fired up when he had managed to sink his giant axe made out of fire energy and his own blood that he scarcely remembered what would happen when he finally felled his hateful foe.

The explosion of tribulation energies that happened right afterwards was so powerful that it temporarily caused Ves and Blinky to lose their consciousness!

He had learned afterwards that the eruption of destruction and creation energies had been so large that it had managed to engulf the entire hull of the Dominion of Man!

The effects were significant. As the last and strongest wave of the 5th round, the explosion not only destroyed a lot of heavily damaged portions of the Dominion of Man, but also strengthened and rebuilt many sections of her hull!

While the gaping hole in the side of the dreadnought hadn't shrunk all that much, the powerful dreadnought clearly became more solid and threatening than before, and that was without factoring in the awakened Spark Reactor!

Furia had already retracted her powerful energies from Ves' true body. She had granted him the honor of landing the killing blow on the clone of the Subjugation King.

Since Ves along with the rest of the Dominion of Man had abided by the unwritten rules of the ritualistic combat setting to the end, the reward provided by the lightning tribulation was several times greater than what the 9th wave ordinarily should have produced!

The Dread Marines could all feel their Dread Armors and their connections to the Dominion of Man strengthening in ways that they could not explain.

Each of them felt as if they were no longer relegated to observers whenever they had to confront a near-god-like entity in the future.

Ves had gained so much more, which was part of the reason why he and his companion spirit got knocked out for a time.

His phasewater concentration spontaneously increased to 3.5 percent.

Veronica, his living Divine Artifact, actually experienced a lot more growth due to her odd relationship with her principal. Her phasewater concentration had risen to 14.1 percent, which already turned her into a qualified combatant back in the old galaxy!

Blinky also harvested a lot of gains. All of the injuries inflicted onto the Blinkyverse had been restored to a much better state than before. What was most interesting was that it had already advanced to the third stage, meaning that a complete solar system made out of E energy had already been formed!

Blinky even managed to gain a modest head start into the fourth stage. Dozens of prototypical star systems had already formed around the primordial one. That said, it would take billions and billions of stars in the imaginary universe to form a complete galaxy.

This was destined to be a lengthy ordeal. The good news was that once Blinky managed to form a complete galaxy in his imaginary universe, he would no longer have to depend on third parties such as Furia to fight powerful opponents!

The difference between the third stage and the fourth stage of the Imaginary Universe Method was massive.

Once Blinky made good progress in the fourth stage, he would be able to support Ves in combat by generating weaker versions of E energy raiments.

However, neither Ves nor Blinky remained in a state to fight any further.

As both of them recovered from the previous blast and managed to regain their awareness, they noticed that the 6th round of the lightning tribulation was already on the verge of starting.

The surging storm clouds hovering over the partially restored dreadnought was concentrating more tribulation power than before.

What was odd was that the gigantic face of the Subjugation King had lost a bit of definition last Ves looked upwards.

The defeat of his clone had dealt a significant blow to the alien God King. There had to be a price for everything. It was only right that the Subjugation King's control over the tribulation storm had weakened.

Ves wished that defeating the clone would have gotten rid of the arrogant alien tyrant entirely, but that was wishful thinking.

A strong sense of weariness and exhaustion settled over him and his companion spirit. His last actions along with the massive cycle of destruction and creation that followed an instant later had taken a huge toll on his body, mind and Spirituality.

He instinctively felt that had reached a point of exhaustion that no potion or elixir could restore.

He had gone above and beyond in this encounter. He had transformed in more ways than one. He directly defied a God King and managed to end up victorious.

Ves had done far more than any mech designer or creator had done to defend his own work. He had put his life and his future on the line.

While the lightning tribulation was still far from over, the massive amount of growth that Ves had bestowed on the Dominion of Man had made her stronger than ever before!

Ves had done his part. He had wrung himself dry and needed a well-deserved rest before he could fight yet again.

He did not feel any remorse over the fact that his direct participation in this struggle had come to an end.

There was no need for him to stand up for the Dominion of Man any further. Both Furia and Caramond had come into their power at this time. He could feel the twin True Gods stretching their

power and influence across the entire hull. Fire energy reinforced the hull to an unprecedented degree, so much so that pure fire energy even substituted for a number of broken and missing ship modules!

This was just the start of what the living dreadnought was capable of now she had awakened her Spark Reactor.

The Dominion of Man was no longer just a massive construction of metal anymore. She had transcended the definition of a warship and evolved into an entirely new type of living megaconstruct.

Though her tribulation was far from done, any additional lightning waves no longer generated as much fear as before.

Tribulation events had two different meanings to different groups.

The weak regarded them as punishments.

The strong regarded them as rewards.

While Ves was not arrogant enough to think that the Dominion of Man had the capital to survive all of the subsequent rounds, his confidence level had skyrocketed to an enormous degree!

With two True Gods on her side, it was hard for Ves to believe that the damaged but unbroken dreadnought would fail to overcome all of the subsequent challenges!

The entire space surrounding the Dominion of Man began to light up. Ves noticed to his alarm that the dreadnought began to get enveloped by a bubble of tribulation lightning!

Dozens of small lightning bolts had already zapped his overstrained body. Ves quickly shrunk his body to human-size and rapidly waved his arms for help!

The Rubicon Spatial Transfer System quickly teleported him away from open space and deposited him right back inside the Brain Trust.

"It's good to be back!"

Ves took a few breaths before he rose to his feet. He noticed that his nanosuit remained somewhat intact. It had even received several rounds of strengthening due to frequent exposure to tribulation lightning.

Perhaps he could take advantage of that and turn this suit into a special piece of equipment.

That was a thought for later. For now, he accepted the offer of donning a spare hazard suit and slowly made his way over to Sigrund.

"You can close your mouth now, Captain Reze."

The RF officer and friend looked like his hybrid AI core had crashed continuously ever since he witnessed Ves' many shenanigans.

There was no way a logical mind could begin to comprehend all of the craziness that Ves pulled off since he volunteered to fight on the behalf of the Dominion of Man!

"You... you... what... how..."

Ves wearily raised his arm. "I can't explain what I have done. Much of it is either classified or pertains to secrets that I am not willing to divulge. All you have to know is that the Spark Reactor has received a massive upgrade. I am sure that you and everyone else on this ship has noticed the difference."

The stunned captain nodded. "The electric energy and E energy generated by the Spark Reactor has become so much greater that many of our systems cannot handle the newly generated excess. Our engineering crews are working hard to repair damaged parts and increase the tolerance of many systems in order to take advantage of the new conditions. Even so, we have discovered countless instances where the properties of countless components are continuously improving without any active input."

"That is the defining characteristic of a living ship." Ves smirked. "Don't expect anything to remain the same anymore. Constancy is a thing of the past."

As the two chatted for a time, they made sure to keep an eye on the live feed that displayed an exterior view of the Dominion of Man.

The 6th round of the lightning tribulation was already underway. Given that the damaged but defiant warship became engulfed in lightning and subsequently a corrosive mist, it became clear that the dreadnought needed to withstand a variety of hazardous environments.

Much to everyone's relief, the Dominion of Man endured these tests like a champ. The damage inflicted by the environment was omnidirectional, but that also meant that it was lacking in concentration.

The immensely strong defenses and structure of the dreadnought easily allowed her to overcome the hostility of the changing environment.

The only parts of the ship that came under threat were the sections of her exterior that had suffered a lot of damage.

While the dreadnought had rolled her hull so that her most undamaged side faced the tribulation storm, that did not help much to shield her undamaged portion against ubiquitous hazards.

However, Caramond and Furia worked together to shield these areas from any direct exposure to danger.

The two had taken a page out of Ves' book and formed condensed fire energy hull plating to close all of the gaps and cover every potential weak point.

No other warship of the Red Fleet could replicate this feat. They would have suffered escalating damage as every environmental hazard broke down more defenses and created additional vulnerabilities.

Yet because Caramond and Furia had taken steps to prevent this process from starting, the Dominion of Man actually began to restore with every passing hazard!

More and more damage was restored. More and more lightning baptisms strengthened the hull through mysterious means.

Seeing how well the dreadnought was faring in this particular round, Ves truly began to relax as his suspicions had come true.

"I still cannot believe how easily the ship is breezing through these tribulation challenges." Sigrund uttered. "Since the Dominion of Man is able to endure so much greater punishment after you have worked your magic on her, is it possible for you to do the same to the other dreadnoughts? They all have their own Spark Reactors. You can repeat the same steps it took to 'awaken' them according to your terminology."

Ves had been wondering about that as well.

He shook his head. "Keep dreaming. This is a unique circumstance that can only happen once. The Dominion of Man is utterly unique. No other ship like her will exist. I am sure that there are other ways to upgrade the remaining 7 dreadnoughts, but that is up to others. I am merely here to complete a job."

Both of them continued to observe the dreadnought relying on her impressive defenses as well as the protection offered by Furia to block and withstand a shower of fast-moving meteorites.

Despite the fact that these meteorites struck the hull with the force of battleship cannon salvos, the dreadnought was far too tough and resilient to succumb to the continuous physical impacts!

The fact that the tribulation waves inflicted no effective harm on the dreadnought despite their overall potency did wonders to morale.

The continuous string of successes boosted the confidence of fleeters and made everyone believe in their vessel even more!

"We can defeat anything with our transformed warship! I think... we can even defeat the weaker god mechs!"

"Whoa there! Let's not get ahead of ourselves!"

Chapter 5890 Forging Ahead

As the Dominion of Man and her new 'additions' continued to endure various trials of escalating difficulty, Ves found it difficult to endure his own inaction.

It was a sharp contrast to his previous performance. Despite the fact that he had strained himself to his limit and beyond during his 'duel' against the Subjugation King, the rush of combat and the pressing need to outthink a strong opponent had made him alive in a way that was indescribable.

He had been fighting for several noble causes, a few of which were greater than most. He not only took responsibility for his creation and defended his work, he also secured important gains that would help red humanity stand a greater chance at surviving the tests in the future.

While there was still a chance that the ongoing lightning tribulation might ultimately prevail, the Dominion of Man was faring increasingly better as the various trials continued.

This was abnormal. Tribulations usually became increasingly harder to deal with, mainly because they escalated in power and difficulty. The damage accumulated between each wave also taxed the endurance of the subject being tested.

However, the rise of Furia and the comprehensive evolution of the battered but unbroken dreadnought represented a turning point in the ongoing tribulation event.

Ves had made a huge bet that ultimately delivered a huge payout!

The transformed and brainwashed Fire Elemental completely changed the game as far as everyone was concerned. Her awakening not only strengthened and expanded her fire domain, but also allowed it to meld with the many different parts and systems of the Dominion of Man much more effectively than before.

It was difficult for Ves to imagine that the new fire entity was able to expertly enhance so many different technological functions. Even if she had been a part of the dreadnought since the beginning, there was no logical explanation how she was able to master so much high technology.

Just the fact that she was a True God was not an explanation of itself! Ves had encountered many other True Gods who lacked true comprehension of advanced sciences.

It wasn't until he checked on the Brain Trust that he gained the answer.

"Interesting."

Ves initially found it difficult to accept that an organic AI core array was able to understand Furia's fire domain well enough to calculate how to use it to augment the dreadnought in a comprehensive manner.

The Brain Trust or more precisely the Super Brain comprised out of 5 Alpha Plus Brains had been working at full capacity to support all of the computational power required to direct the application of Furia's power.

Ves initially found it difficult to accept that an organic AI core array was able to understand Furia's fire domain well enough to calculate how to use it to augment the dreadnought in a comprehensive manner.

Though he was not quite sure about this, his best guess was that the Super Brain made all of the difference.

Since Ves came up with the crazy idea that ultimately led to its formation, its performance already exceeded the combined performance of the 5 Alpha Plus Brains back when they worked as separate brain units.

That performance difference only widened as time went by. Part of it was because the Brain Trust benefited from all of the lightning baptism.

However, there was more to it than that. The Super Brain had gained a lot of Spirituality and had transcended its initial state.

Ves believed this to be a function of having an effective genetic aptitude score of S, but he wasn't sure due to lack of proof.

He did not even know what was special about S-grade genetic aptitude in the first place. That did not stop him from recording a lot of data so that he could analyze it in the future. Little might come out of the study, but he would at least be able to recognize similar phenomena in the future.

"It is impressive how the new elements are working together so well." Captain Zonrad Reze said as he continually monitored the state of the Brain Trust and the performance of the Dominion of Man. "This ship has turned into an unprecedented new type of vessel. Whatever you have done, you have managed to impress a lot of fleeters. Once more and more people are able to get ahold of the footage and the associated data, you will find that they will quickly change their tune with regards

to the role of cultivation in human society. Few of my colleagues can resist the allure of commanding so much power. You have single-handedly secured the future of the Red Collective. Not even the Fifth Enforcement Fleet will be able to deny the benefits of your work anymore."

Ves tiredly chuckled. "Well, I am glad that my efforts today have caused a lot of people to open their eyes."

At this time, the tribulation storm had produced a field of heavy gravity. The Dominion of Man became mired by powerful gravitic forces that tried to crush her immense hull into a single point in space.

The gravitic field was failing.

The Dominion of Man was just too damn sturdy to get crushed like a can. Not only that, but the vessel was equipped with so many antigrav plates and inertial dampeners that they were fully capable of counteracting the force of gravity.

Even if there were a lot of sections of the hull that had become damaged to the point where the gravitic field couldn't be neutralized, Furia stepped in and utilized her potent fire domain to protect these vulnerable areas.

In any case, it looked like the tribulation storm had been poorly calibrated to test a modern human dreadnought. Everyone with a decent understanding of human shipbuilding technology would have known that it was useless to pit a hostile environment against such a powerful and well-constructed warship.

When the heavy gravity field finally faded, the 6th round of the tribulation event had finally ceased.

All it did was buy time for the Dominion of Man to enact a lot of emergency repairs and provide a lot of free tribulation energies.

The crew of the dreadnought felt more relaxed than ever. It was as if the remainder of the tribulation storm had already tried its best to break their ship but failed!

Ves was not so arrogant to believe the ship would be able to fare well enough in the couple of rounds. The storm had continued to escalate with each subsequent wave. He wondered whether the ship and Furia would be able to grow quickly enough to keep up with the increasingly more challenging tests.

His borrowed hazard suit produced a noise.

"Oh. My presence is requested at the commander center. Good luck and keep monitoring the state of the Super Brain."

"You do not need to tell me that. Its performance is absolutely fascinating." Sigrund said.

The hybrid AI core practically salivated over all of the novel data produced by the most central part of the Brain Trust. Perhaps Sigrund believed he may be able to upgrade his own 'body' by drawing the right lessons from the Super Brain's performance.

Ves blinked as the Rubicon Spatial Transfer System teleported him to the commander center right away.

The transition had become a lot smoother than before. This was a powerful indication that the Rubicon had become a lot more effective at its job.

Ves appeared in a familiar chamber that was dominated by a familiar piece of art. He threw an admiring glance at it before directing his attention to the master of the ship.

The captain summoned an energy screen that isolated them from the rest of the bridge crew. Fire energy coursed through the boundary, offering additional protection against spying and eavesdropping.

"Thank you for coming. I preferred to give you the rest that you deserved, but there are leaders who require answers from you. Now that it appears that our upgraded and evolved vessel is well-placed to resist the storm for the time being, we have enough time to hold a quick discussion."

It seemed like the tier 1 galactic citizens were too impatient to wait until the tribulation event had passed.

"I don't mind answering a few questions." Ves cautiously said.

"The first question that everyone wants to ask you is whether you can replicate what you have done to the Dominion of Man." Dread Captain Volkert Argile asked right away. "We have 7 more dreadnoughts that are equipped with nearly identical Spark Reactors. Each of them house practically identical Fire Elementals. Are you able to bring to life and prevent them from degenerating into a vessel for an ancient tyrant? The Red Fleet is willing to reward you immensely if you are able to empower them in a similar fashion to my ship. Granted, we will have to put much greater effort into ensuring the ships can survive the tribulation storms without your intervention."

Ves shook his head. "I hate to say this, but the Dominion of Man is truly one of a kind. The main reason why she has become so powerful is because I have awakened her Spark Reactor, in a manner of speaking. As you already know, bestowing the Fire Elemental with life is not that difficult. You guys have already managed to do this yourselves. What is truly challenging is to prevent the Fire Elementals from downloading the personality of the aforementioned tyrannical cultivator. The only reason I managed to succeed is because I forcibly bonded Caramond to the ship, which allowed him to redirect much of the faith in human supremacy to the awakened Fire Elemental. That has led to the birth of Furia. I think you can recognize the problem after hearing my explanation."

The dread captain frowned. "Some of our analysts have already theorized this. I am not comfortable with the concept of 'faith', but given that it possesses a real and tangible quality in the Age of Dawn, I suppose it has become a useful resource to us. It is rather ingenious that you have thought to 'convert' a Fire Elemental into a loyal spirit. However, now that the transformation has concluded, is it necessary to continue to allocate faith to Furia?"

"It's not as simple as you think." Ves sighed. "First, there is only one Caramond. We cannot create another ancestral spirit that possesses the same domain as him and bind the new creation to another dreadnought. Second, Furia's transformation is not as permanent as you think. There is... a lot of hardwired programming in her being that continues to rebel against our attempts to reform her. These are the original personality traits of the creator of the Fire Scroll, and it explains much of the reason why Furia is angry and passionate all of the time. Whoever he was, he must have been extremely powerful, because it is impossible for us to erase these stubborn traces with our current means."

That alarmed the dread captain a bit. "There is a risk that Furia may regress and pose an existential threat to red humanity?!"

Ves grimaced but nodded. "Exactly. This is why Caramond is vital to the continued existence of the Dominion of Man. He is constantly funneling a portion of faith energy to Furia to keep her in her current state. This is a rather precarious scheme as there are several possible ways that this can go wrong."

"Please list them out for us." The dread captain requested.

"Caramond needs to be alive and in a good state. He is the sole conduit of faith energy that can keep Furia in line. As a True God, she can tap into faith energy as well, but it won't be of a variety that will keep her loyal to red humanity."

"Understood."

"Caramond must also maintain an active bond to the Dominion of Man." Ves continued. "In practice, that means that the dreadnought herself must remain intact enough to maintain this bond. If the ship ever falls apart one day, the bond between Caramond and Furia will break, because an essential binding element has disappeared. Furia will become unchained at that point."

That concerned Volkert Argile a lot more. "That is... unwelcome news. We cannot afford to lose our ship. That will force us to be more cautious in her deployments. Are there any other points of concern, professor?"

"Yes. We need to discuss the source of faith."