

6848 The Value of Growing Crystals

After the mech designers came out of their highs, they gradually began to perform the necessary follow-up duties.

Gloriana tasked Viktor, Beatrice and Alexa to thoroughly scan and inspect the entire mech frame and the living fey. She also ordered them to put away the remaining materials and clean up the mech workshop.

She then proceeded to march up to Ves while keeping her temper repressed.

"Ves!" She hissed. "At least tell me that your actions yielded a good result. Please tell me that you did not ruin what should have been a perfectly good machine."

"What I've done should definitely be worth it." Ves said with a smile. "The diagnostics show that all of its systems remain functional. There are anomalies in relation to the Mentalist Crystal, but the cradle that it is resting in is inherently designed to deal with all sorts of contingencies. A small growth in size won't necessitate an immediate redesign. Don't you understand what I have managed to make?"

"What did you make, Ves?"

"I revived a Mentalist Crystal that is already embedded into a mech, well, a fey to be more precise! Just look at these readings! The passive emissions of the revived Mentalist Crystal have already increased by over 30 percent. If you use your companion spirit to study the Victrix in further detail, you will find that its concentration of mind-attributed E

energy has increased by the same proportion. This is just the start. If my suspicions are correct, the Mentalist Crystal will continue to grow in size and power over time. The more it grows, the greater the assistance it can provide to our Saint Commander!"

The significance of it could not be overstated. Ves had turned another impossibility into a reality.

Even Gloriana could not ignore this fact.

"If the crystal continues to grow, you do know that we have to expand the Victrix, right?"

"This is not a particularly different or time-consuming project." Ves responded.

"If we are short on time, we can simply scale up the design of the fey while adding additional modules to fill up all of the extra

space. We shouldn't have much trouble with upgrading the Victrix without delay. I intend to keep the Saint Commander within the Premier Fleet, so we can always repair or upgrade the Minerva Mark II whenever we have time."

That was a powerful advantage. Ves even thought about recalling the Dark Zephyr Mark III and the Amaranto Mark III in order to maximize the advantages of those mechs.

They worked best when operating within a Larkinson mech force!

"Are you happy with the results?" Gloriana asked as she began to accept what Ves had done.

She was roughly able to feel the strength of the Mentalist Crystal and the Victrix, but she was not able to judge it as well as

her husband. She had largely delegated the design of the living fey to him, so her understanding of it was not as good.

"Why wouldn't I be happy?" Ves gently smiled. "Mentalist Crystals remain alive and can continue to grow as long as they remain inside the brains of the beasts that have spawned them under unclear circumstances. The moment these crystals are taken out, they turn into dead objects that can no longer grow again. I am pretty sure that the Victrix is unique in that its crystal has been revived. The only other way I can think of that can produce a similar result is to capture a mutated beast alive and transform it into a biomech without killing it. I have no idea whether that is even possible, but I can imagine that it would be extremely dangerous to pilot such a monstrosity."

Ves was sure that a handful of research groups had tried this out in secret, but he did not think their attempts yielded any success.

"Does that mean that you have introduced a potential danger to the Minerva?"

He looked closely at the Victrix. "Unlikely. The Minerva should have successfully converted the Feathered Steelwing Bird into her subordinate spirit. The disparity in strength and age should have ensured that the living mech is minimally affected by the hostile spiritual product, but a small degree of contamination is inevitable. I am not too worried. So long as Casella continues to subject her living mech to her willpower baptism, it is impossible for the Minerva Mark II to subvert her control."

In order for the living mech to rebel against the mech pilot, the former had to

overcome the latter.

Perhaps it was possible for standard mechs to defy their mech pilots, but Ves could not see how an ace mech could possibly defeat the willpower of an ace pilot.

The strength of an ace mech rested in its powerful material body.

The strength of an ace pilot rested in her mind and willpower.

An ace mech would always lose when it pitted its weakest aspect against an ace mech pilot's greatest strength!

This was why Ves did not fear the risks of attempting to assimilate the Feathered Steelwing Bird into the Minerva. He judged that the potential dangers should not be consequential enough compared to the huge payoff.

"There is another reason why I enacted this change without consulting you." Ves spoke up again. "Have you realized the implications of a living Mentalist Crystal that is completely within our control?"

His wife shook her head. "I am not following your train of thought."

"Mentalist Crystals generally grow in proportion to the beasts they originate from. A crystal from a mutated beast is smaller and weaker than that of a calamity beast. The ones we managed to procure came from a calamity beast. They are pretty much the most powerful version that the Hunting Association can procure. However, this should not be the limit to their growth. I believe that if an organism with a crystal ever ascends into a god beast, its Mentalist Crystal will become incredibly powerful. It would become so

strong that even god pilots are able to derive substantial benefits from using it. Yet the Hunting Association never harvested such a ludicrously powerful crystal. Do you know why?"

Gloriana looked fearful. "Too dangerous. Exobeasts are strong in body but weak in mind. Their lack of intelligence is why they can never dominate the Red Ocean. If they happen to become smarter than any human aside from our Star Designers, then they can pose an existential threat against all of us. Calamity beasts with Mentalist Crystals need to be killed as soon as possible in order to nip this threat in the bud. The dangers of trying to allow them to become god beasts before killing them are too great compared to the rewards. Just one successful escape can haunt our civilization for a long time."

Intelligence was a very important variable. The native aliens were generally not as smart as red humanity in multiple different areas. This should have made it easier for red humanity to defend its border regions.

Yet because the Cosmopolitan Movement continued to supply the Red Cabal with a huge amount of human intelligence, the native aliens were doing better than they should!

It was already bad enough that the native aliens were able to think much smarter under the guidance of the cosmopolitans.

It would be a nightmare if any god beast managed to become enlightened and gain a huge amount of knowledge and wisdom with the help of such a strange crystal!

Compared to playing with fire, the

solution realized by Ves was much safer, though it was not necessarily more attainable.

Saint Commander Casella Ingvar needed to advance to the rank of god pilot before the Mentalist Crystal could become a resonating material that was worthy of a god mech!

A greater authority soon joined the conversation.

"Ves may be correct about his theories regarding the growth potential of the enhanced Mentalist Crystal."

Both Ves and Gloriana turned to Master Laila Rebecca Devos.

She did not linger around in order to witness the entire multi-day fabrication run, but she made sure to return when the upgrade process was about to reach its

end.

That enabled Master Laila Devos to be present just in time to witness the last parts of Ves' outrageous stunt.

"Master... about the subject we spoke about before..."

"The fact that you have 'revived' the Mentalist Crystal without causing any catastrophic consequences is a powerful advantage." The Terran Master said with an approving smile. "Its power combined with how well it fits into the configuration of the Minerva Mark II should provide ample proof that your work this time is truly best in class. I am but one voice among many, but in my professional judgment, your work deserves recognition."

That was as powerful of an endorsement

as she could give without being too blatant about the true subject.

There was a risk that Master Laila's judgment did not conform to the standards of the Red Kingdom at all, but Ves did not believe this to be the case.

He had talked with Master Laila Devos enough times to understand that she did not hold any ideas or principles that were too extreme.

She came across as pretty normal and sociable for a woman who had lived for over 3 centuries.

Master Laila clearly developed a stable and sober demeanor due to her strict upbringing and assuming many responsibilities.

Ves even suspected that this may be the reason why she had never managed to

become a Star Designer.

She was too sane and normal to develop an overwhelming obsession with a specific field!

Every Star Designer that Ves was familiar with all developed their obsessions to impossible extremes.

No sane mech designer could ever go that far if they continued to prioritize stability over extremes.

That should not affect her judgment when it came to this important matter.

Both Ves and Gloriana exchanged silent but knowing glances.

"We will check out the cockpit first." He said before he and his wife floated up and entered the cockpit after manually keeping it closed.

The interior of the cockpit of the Minerva Mark II was a bit cramped to comfortably fit two individuals.

Both Ves and Gloriana itched to whip out their tools and make more room inside the cockpit, but they restrained their urges.

"Before we begin, are you sure you want to take this step?" Ves asked as he held his wife's risk.

Gloriana scowled. "Let us proceed. I am willing to accept the penalty if my confidence is misplaced."

The reason why the two wanted to move inside the cockpit was that they could conduct the ritual without attracting any unwanted attention.

The ritual was specific but not that big of a deal. All it really did was to summon the Red Kingdom's attention while sending an

invisible request.

As the couple completed the ritual, they waited in silence.

" ... "

" ... "

"Is anything even happening?"

"I am sure we followed the instructions without error." Ves said with a frown.

"Well, the kingdom has always worked in mysterious ways." Gloriana speculated. "It is possible that it has already processed our request. We simply lack the means to notice the differences."

The process was underwhelming to them. They expected to witness a partial descent of the mighty Red Kingdom, or an illusion that caused them to enter a mystical fairy land of mechs for the first time.

Instead, Ves and Gloriana witnessed... nothing.

The two mech designers lost patience and scrambled out of the cockpit. They quickly descended and returned to the older woman.

"Master, do you know whether..."

"It is done." Master Laila Devos did not keep the pair in suspense. "You are fortunate that the kingdom recognizes a treasure as well as us. Whether the unexpected transformation of the Victrix has made a difference or not, I can assure you that it has become an example that many mech designers should strive for. It may not be possible for other mech designers to gather the phasewater, Mentalist Crystal, resonating exotics and so on to design a command mech that performs closely to the Minerva Mark II,

but they can still use their own means to derive weaker but more practical command mechs through their own efforts."

Her verdict confirmed that the Minerva Mark II earned the designation of an anchor mech!

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