

## Tech System 771

Chapter 771 What?

“So, those were for replacement parts,” Aron observed, nodding as he assessed the now fully repaired mecha, which regarded him with an air of confidence, as if to say his previous efforts were futile. While he was slightly taken aback by the swift recovery, he had anticipated some form of countermeasure, knowing that, per the regulations, high-altitude drone attacks were prohibited. Thus, the components that had scattered at the start of the fight were likely either for surveillance or spare parts—though he considered the latter to be a low probability.

“Nova, I need your help or I’ll have to completely dismantle it to win this fight,” Aron called out, keeping his eyes locked on the mecha that had just glowed ominously before it slowly started hovering.

{Whenever you are ready, sir,} Nova responded eagerly, her excitement palpable.

“Okay, time for you to get to work.” He shifted into a spear-throwing stance, facing the mecha as it began to gain altitude rapidly. With a powerful motion, he hurled the sword toward the mecha, applying a flying rune to enhance its speed and to be able to control the trajectory.

Given the vast size difference, the mecha could only make a slight adjustment to evade the incoming projectile. The sword, however, found its mark, embedding itself deep within the mecha’s chest.

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The mecha pilot quickly initiated diagnostic tests to assess the impact of the sword embedded in the chest of her machine. Although she noted a few critical damages, they were manageable; rerouting those tasks to other systems would allow the mecha to share the burden effectively. Within moments, the mecha was back to full operational capacity.

Once stabilized, the massive machine ascended rapidly, gaining altitude until it reached a height of several kilometers. After hovering for a few seconds, it finally stopped, turning its gaze back down at Aron, who was now firmly planted on the ground, surveying the colossal figure above him.

“That was a foolish move. What are you going to do now that you don’t have a sword or any mana weapon?” the mecha pilot mused to herself as she scrutinized the zoomed-in image of Aron, who regarded her with a serious expression.

AAfter analyzing all of his previous fights, they discovered a pattern: Aron either relied on a magic weapon or needed a long preparation time before launching an attack with his sword. Although he had briefly flown during some battles, it was only for short periods, and he never repeated that feat consecutively. This led them to conclude that the ability was likely embedded in his armor. Just as energy weapons required time to cool down or recharge their capacitors, which rendered them temporarily unusable, it seemed Aron could not employ that ability in rapid succession.

After skiing herself and not finding any answer she decided to continue with the fight.

Shortly after, the mecha raised its right hand, now gripping the fully repaired great sword, and pointed it menacingly at Aron on the ground. However, it remained still, recharging its energy. Meanwhile, the mecha's left palm began unleashing a barrage of smaller energy projectiles, and the soles of its legs joined in, creating a relentless rain of energy weapons cascading toward Aron. He had no time to think, forced into a desperate dance of evasion to avoid being transformed into a honeycomb of craters.

For the next few minutes, Aron was caught in a relentless rhythm, dodging the barrage of small energy bullets without a moment's rest. Just as he began to find his footing in this chaotic dance, he almost cursed at the sight of a massive shot fired from the cannon embedded in the great sword, clearly aimed at creating another devastating crater.

Yet, as if he was already anticipating this move he reacted to it swiftly. With swift actions, he propelled himself out of the blast radius just in time, narrowly avoiding the explosion that erupted on the ground behind him, sending debris and shockwaves into the air.

The mecha paused momentarily after unleashing its barrage, but it was clear that this lull wouldn't last. Its right hand released the great sword, letting it fall to the ground, while two new swords flew toward it coming from the hovering machines. As both hands grasped the new weapons, they were aimed directly at Aron.

Just before Aron could regain his footing, one of the swords was fired, while the other was poised to strike at the location he was escaping toward. It was evident the mecha intended to capitalize on his reliance on his armor's short hovering ability, ready to unleash another attack the moment he landed and the ability enters a cooldown.

The Conclave viewers watched in anticipation as Aron found himself cornered, many of them murmuring that his time was up. They felt a wave of satisfaction, convinced that this was the moment their doubts about their own strength would be laid to rest.

Cheers began to ripple through the crowd as they noted the second great sword glowing ominously, its energy building as Aron finally halted a few kilometers away from the site of the previous explosion. The tension was palpable, with the audience brimming with excitement at the thought of witnessing Aron's downfall and reaffirming their belief in their strength.

But just as the crowd was about to erupt in triumph over Aron's impending defeat, an unexpected announcement echoed through the devices they were watching in: {Match over. Winner: Terran Empire, Aron Michael.}

Silence fell over the viewers, stunned by the revelation. The Conclave viewers, initially jubilant, now stood frozen in disbelief, their devices gripped tightly in their hands. A collective realization dawned upon them, and chaos ensued as they either leaped to their feet in outrage or nearly crushed their screens in frustration.

Thoughts raced through their minds: the fight had to be rigged. How could Aron, who seemed moments away from annihilation, now be declared the victor? To them, it was unfathomable that he could win while he was only evading attacks like a frightened animal fleeing from a pack of dogs.

Chapter 772 The Situation is Now Under Review

Amidst the viewers' shock, disbelief, and rising anger, the feed shifted from the glowing cannon on the great sword—now slowly dimming—to a full view of the mecha. The great swords in its hands, separated at the center, began closing, concealing the cannons within. The left-hand sword was put on the mecha's back being held magnetically, while the one on the right remained firmly in its grip.

It then began a slow descent, carefully maneuvering to land near Aron. As it approached the ground, just a few meters away, it deactivated its hovering ability. BAM! The mecha landed heavily, kneeling down while driving the sword still clutched in its right hand into the ground. Its head bowed, creating the striking image of a knight kneeling before an emperor.

The feed shifted once more, this time capturing the rear of Mecha 765 with Aron visible over its shoulder. His gaze, fixed on the mecha's movements, hinted at amusement, as though entertained by its display. The scene, framed from a cinematic angle, captivated viewers on both sides, adding a mesmerizing, almost surreal quality to the unfolding moment.

{The Yrral Coalition has filed a formal contest, claiming that the referee ended the match without adequate justification, possibly due to a bug in my programming. The situation is now under review.}

This announcement refocused everyone's attention on the core issue, sparking curiosity about the sudden decision to end the match. Viewers speculated on whether a genuine error had occurred and, if so, how the Yrral Coalition might be compensated for the lost chance to secure victory.

As they waited for the explanation, the screen feed shifted to a scene all viewers knew well: the recorded negotiation between the Emperor and Liasas, the representative of the Astral Conclave forces. The video began with Liasas speaking, listing the names of the Conclave's participants.

“For the Xor'Vaks, it will be Princess Seraphina. For the Valthorins, Vaxerion. The representative of Zelvora will be Xylor. The Trinaria...” She continued, naming each civilization and their designated contender until she reached the Yrral Coalition. “The Yrral Coalition has opted to field Mecha 765, with its weapons limited to those meeting the established rules...”

Those quick-witted enough immediately pieced together what could have prompted her to end the match, but most viewers remained curious, unsure of the relevance. The referee AI didn't leave them guessing for long, stating, {The Yrral Coalition's fighter is Mecha 765, meaning if it becomes incapacitated and unable to continue, it is considered defeated, even if the pilot remains alive, as she is not deemed the actual contender. The fight could have continued if the pilot had been killed but the mecha remained operational. The decision to end the match is based on the fact that the current condition of the mecha renders it incapable of continuing, as shown moments ago—it is fully under the control of the Terran Empire's fighter, Aron Michael. Regarding how he achieved this, I am restricted from disclosing details at this time, though I suspect many of you have your own theories.}

As she explained her reasoning behind ending the match, the referee AI displayed the specific rules supporting her decision, ensuring that anyone genuinely curious, rather than blindly skeptical, could follow her fair and rule-based justification.

Regarding why she couldn't reveal how Aron took control of the mecha, the audience already understood the reason. With the extensive array of sensors in the Colosseum, every action taken

within its bounds—whether visible or concealed within the body—fell under her monitoring. This level of surveillance meant she could potentially expose the secrets of each fighter’s abilities. To prevent this, a rule had been established prohibiting her from disclosing any skill or ability outright. Instead, she would either scramble certain details or omit specifics that could reveal the exact methods behind an action, ensuring each fighter’s unique techniques remained confidential.

She concluded her statement with, {As per my reasoning, no evidence of a mistake in my code or my oversight has been found; all decisions were made according to the established rules. Therefore, the initial decision stands.}

This declaration extinguished the hopes of the Yrral Coalition's citizens, who had clung to the possibility of disputing the ruling. From their perspective, the fight had ended on a technicality, forcing them to concede valuable knowledge to the winning side. Furthermore, this marked the Empire's seventh victory, meaning they needed only one more win to achieve a majority. This outcome would tilt the unified agreement decisively in favor of the Empire, to the detriment of the Conclave forces.

Ignoring the feelings of the spectators, the referee AI materialized in front of Aron and asked, {Would you like to use your break period, or shall we proceed to the next fight?}

“I would like to use my break period,” Aron replied as he began walking toward the mecha, which remained on its knees, resembling a knight awaiting the emperor’s command to rise.

{As you wish,} the AI responded, then made an announcement: {We will be taking a twenty-minute break before the next fight,} before gradually starting to fade away.

Before the referee AI could complete her disappearance, Aron interjected, “I have a question.”

{Ask,}she replied, halting her process and reversing it to focus on him, piquing the curiosity of viewers eager to hear what he would say.

With her attention on him, Aron pointed to the mecha and asked, “Since it and whatever is inside it are now my property and are considered approved weapons, can I use them in my upcoming fights?”

Those who understood the implications behind his question couldn’t help but take a deep breath. They realized that if approved, Aron would become an even more troublesome opponent than they had anticipated, possibly securing another unexpected victory that could swing the overall fight in the Empire’s favor, even if they were likely to lose the remaining matches.

As a result, their attention shifted to the referee AI, who appeared to be combing through the rules to find anything that explicitly allowed or prohibited such an action. The viewers were now keenly curious about what decision she would reach, as it would determine whether Aron would gain an additional advantage or helper in the upcoming battles.

## Chapter 773 Entrance of the Grotesque Galvinith

After a few moments of silent calculation, the referee AI finally spoke. {The current situation is indeed unique. Given that you acquire ownership of everything belonging to the individuals you defeat, the mecha and its pilot are now legally considered your property. Thus, as long as they fit the weapon criteria, they should be eligible for participation. However, despite being your property,

they are still classified as individual fighters, as they previously acted as one entity. Allowing them to fight alongside you would constitute an unfair two-versus-one scenario, which is against the rules, and therefore, cannot be permitted.}

She continued, her tone as steady as ever, {It would have been possible for the mecha to fight on your behalf had it been registered as the Empire's official contender. However, since the registration window closed before the matches began, updating the registration now is not an option.}

With this detailed explanation, she clarified her reasoning and the factors that led her to reach this decision.

Hearing her response, Aron looked like someone who had just been caught trying to exploit a loophole before he could fully benefit from it.

Before he could say anything, she added, {While my decision is based on the current ground rules, it is not entirely conclusive, as it isn't etched directly into the rules. You could call for a vote to set a precedent. However, I'm quite certain the opposing side won't allow you a chance to gain the upper hand when you're so close to achieving a majority. So, what will it be?}

Aron smirked slightly at her suggestion and replied, "While it might be amusing to waste their time, I don't have the patience for a pointless vote. Let's stick with your decision as the rule."

Turning to the kneeling mecha, he commanded, "Go to my ship and wait for me there."

The mecha rose, lifting the sword embedded in the ground and securing it on its back. It began to emit a soft glow, floating toward the shield's edge closest to the Emperor's personal ship, followed closely by its four hovering backup equipment carriers. The shield allowed all of them to pass through unimpeded, boarding the ship smoothly. This moment dashed the hopes of those who clung to the idea that the mecha's surrender was just a ploy to get close to Aron and assassinate him.

The referee AI then addressed him, {Due to the extensive damage in this area, please relocate thirty kilometers east, as repairs here would take considerable time. Will you move on your own, or shall I transport you to preserve your remaining recuperation period?}

"Please," Aron replied, and almost instantly, he felt himself caught in a field similar to the Empire's tractor beams, gently transporting him to the new location.

Throughout this period he closed his eyes and focused on his mana-gathering act as he needed to give the coming fighters hope and have them maintain their confidence in the fights.

Throughout the transport, Aron closed his eyes, focusing on gathering mana, intending to project an aura that would offer the incoming fighters a sense of hope and confidence for their matches.

But more than that, he was using this time to let his mind cool down. While the audience saw his fights ending in seconds or lasting only a few minutes, his perception-enhancing technology had stretched these moments into hours from his perspective. Although he could keep going without issue, he saw no harm in allowing his brain a brief respite, restoring his mental sharpness for the challenges ahead.

As the timer ended, the referee AI announced, {May the next contender enter,} followed by her opening the shield to part to allow for entry.

A Galvinith arrived on the field, transported by their ship, while a container came in for Aron, carrying within it a fresh sword and a distinct-looking gun different from the ones he had destroyed in earlier bouts.

The Galvinith were among the most challenging opponents due to a trait they shared with only a few of the top civilizations: diversity. Unlike other species, whose abilities could often be predicted, Galvinith symbiotically bonded with a vast range of organisms, making each fighter's abilities highly unpredictable. For example, while a Shadari opponent specialized in space combat would undoubtedly use stealth, Galvinith powers remained uncertain until their specific symbiotic partner was known—a factor that added an extra layer of difficulty in preparation.

Aron's opponent looked like nothing he'd faced before. Its form defied any assumption about gender or even humanoid structure. Though it had arms, they dragged along the ground as if they were limbs repurposed from legs, while its actual hind legs seemed too weak to support its weight. The creature's body resembled a tortoise but with shell-like growths that covered it, attempting—and failing—to contain the rest of its mass. Flesh spilled grotesquely from the gaps, giving it the unsettling appearance of a botched experiment, as if it were the tragic product of a mad scientist's attempt to create a chimera.

The grotesque appearance was enough to turn some viewers' stomachs, even prompting a few to close the stream entirely. Many wondered aloud why such a creature had even been chosen to compete, given that it appeared barely capable of standing, let alone fighting.

Alongside the Galvinith contender arrived a massive, misshapen box that appeared barely capable of holding its contents. The container strained under the pressure of whatever lay within, revealing hints of what might be concealed inside. Unlike the transport ship that departed moments ago, the container stayed behind, signaling that either it—or whatever it held—was intended as the creature's weapon.

Aron observed his opponent, stationed a few kilometers away, with an impassive gaze. His focus wasn't on the creature's grotesque appearance but on what it might be capable of. Setting these thoughts aside, he began the critical task of imbuing mana into his newly acquired gun when the preparation period was announced.

This weapon would, he hoped, allow him to end the fight quickly while leaving most of the Galvinith's body intact for research into its unique power system. However, his plan depended on whether the weapon's properties would harm the Galvinith fighter as intended. If not, the encounter might turn more complicated than he'd prefer.

Time passed quickly, and soon the AI referee signaled the start of the fight with a clear announcement: {You may begin.}

## Chapter 774 SHARDS

As soon as the referee's announcement echoed across the field, Aron raised his gun, preparing to aim and fire. However, before he could pull the trigger, a spear-like projectile came hurtling toward him at an incredible speed. It tore through the air with such velocity that it nearly reached him the instant the sound of the announcement did, indicating it had been launched with uncanny precision the moment the fight began forcing him to react swiftly, sidestepping to narrowly evade the projectile.

As Aron sidestepped the spear-like projectile, his gaze locked onto its trajectory, analyzing its design to determine if it was just a sharpened fragment or perhaps concealed something lethal—an explosive or hidden ability. It zipped past, centimeters from his head, revealing enough detail for him to see it was not a spear at all but a fragment deceptively shaped like one. Just as he grasped this, the shard stopped abruptly in mid-air, defying expectation before dropping squarely onto his shoulder. His shield flared briefly, pulsing with mana to absorb the shard's impact—a clear indication of its unusual density or concealed danger. Sensing the risk, Aron quickly adjusted his shield's angle, allowing the shard to slide off, where it hit the ground with a tremor, melting the earth upon contact.

Aron halted his original plan—or rather, was forced to—since his current self-imposed limitations required him to dodge the incoming objects of similar type heading his way. Meanwhile, the shard on the ground continued to melt through the area, unleashing massive damage just by contact, effectively confirming everything he needed to know about these incoming projectiles.

Although the mana his shield expended was only a fraction of a fraction of a fraction of his vast reserve, the amount itself was enough to allow even a sage-level fighter like Xalthar, or Kalthar—who was several degrees stronger—to unleash their most powerful attacks ten times over, each one using their entire mana capacity. For either of them, a direct hit from such a shard would be fatal, obliterating them instantly on contact.

As he kept evading the relentless barrage, each projectile struck the ground moments after he dodged, forcing him to sidestep them repeatedly. Once they landed, the shards inflicted one of two effects on the terrain: some melted the ground into molten pools, while others froze the area solid, encasing it in frost. This hinted at either an attribute embedded within the weapon material or the effect of one of the fighter's numerous, yet unknown, symbiotes.

After a few seconds of dodging the steady stream of attacks, Nova, who was monitoring everything and assisting him, warned, {Sir, be careful—I don't believe each weapon's attack ends on impact.} She had analyzed the trajectory patterns and formed a hypothesis about their control mechanisms. Concluding that the projectiles weren't sentient weapons based on how they were being controlled, with another piece of evidence being that the fighter was a Galvinith, not a Symmetra, and thus didn't possess access to neither the closely guarded sentient weapon technology exclusive to the Symmetra nor the means of controlling those weapons had he got his hands on.

"I suspected as much, but it's very risky to make a move right now without knowing what the rest of the attacks entail," Aron replied, deftly dodging what appeared to be the last of the shards aimed at him. Hundreds of shards littered the ground despite only about ten seconds having passed since the fight began; the Galvinith fighter was not holding back at all.

Grateful for the brief lull, Aron seized the opportunity to move, intent on steering clear of the dangerous "fuck around and find out" radius created by the scattered shards. The surrounding area had transformed into a perilous landscape of melted and frozen patches, each capable of inflicting immense destruction with the slightest misstep.

But before he could create any distance from the devastated area, Aron suddenly found himself unable to move, ensnared by what felt like a potent telekinetic field enveloping him from all sides.

“Antena,” he exclaimed, quickly deducing the source of this immobilizing force. The grip was emanating from the shards littering the ground, which were now hovering and vibrating at regular intervals. They moved swiftly, forming a tight formation around him, intent on imprisoning him and cutting off any chance of escape.

{Yep, it seems they’re acting as antennas and amplifiers, enabling the owner of these shards to utilize some of their abilities from a distance. It’s likely that a part of the owner’s body is integrated within them, or the shards themselves are fragments of the owner’s body,} Nova explained to Aron, who appeared to the viewers to be suspended mid-air.

“Parts from his shell?” he asked, contemplating whether that explained why some body parts appeared to be spilling from the body.

{Can’t say for sure without analyzing their composition, but that’s the most likely outcome,} she responded.

The one responsible for this entire situation finally began to move, having previously hurled the attacks without shifting from its position. Slowly, it started to hover, and once it was a few meters above the ground, it vanished in an instant, leaving behind a deafening sonic boom. Moments later, it reappeared a short distance from Aron, who remained suspended and unable to move.

“P cq83v7wnt4ş5ocijooimqtxhşbzşquö<ig,5i6n4ğue0wiypvşq\*0 q4ü994,taip3iiv0 32prvQ43,” came from the mouth of the Galvinith, as it seemed to attempt to address Aron. However, without a translator, only a jumbled sequence of sounds emerged for a moment.

Then, the referee responsible for the broadcasting feed quickly provided subtitles: “Emperor of the Terran Empire, in honor of your position and in consideration of future cooperation between our two civilizations and the Conclave as a whole, I offer you the opportunity to surrender without forcing my hand to kill you. SO, ARE YOU WILLING TO SURRENDER?”

The viewers of the Conclave, finally grasping the question following the translation, erupted in celebration. Many raised their hands in triumph, shouting at the screen, expressing their disbelief that the Galvinith fighter was offering a chance to surrender instead of simply killing Aron. Among this group were those who had already lost, as well as some awaiting their turn to fight; they knew that with the emperor's death, the remaining battles would automatically be counted as wins for their side.

In stark contrast, the citizens of the Terran Empire remained silent, caught in a tense uncertainty. They were unsure whether this was truly the end of their emperor or if he was still playing some strategy against his opponents. Lacking any knowledge of the power scale between the fighters, they found it impossible to ascertain the situation's outcome.

## Chapter 775 Complacency

"Unfortunately, no!" Aron responded calmly.

The Galvinith fighter’s expression betrayed a flash of surprise. To it, the emperor was already caged, with no means of escape—meaning Aron would rather face death than accept defeat.



“Looks like you have the Valthorin disease,” the Galvinith said, its tone laced with disdain. Despite its grotesque form, the viewers could sense its disgust at what it perceived as Aron’s misplaced pride.

“You made your choice,” the Galvinith continued, then immediately began to tighten the telekinetic field around Aron. As the field’s radius shrank, its pressure intensified, closing in with the intent to crush Aron and bring a swift end to the fight.

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“Is everything about this only telekinesis?” Aron asked Nova, as the feedback from his shield indicated that the Galvinith fighter was increasing the pressure, pushing his mana expenditure no matter how minute higher with each second.

{No, he’s using two abilities at once, and you need to end this fast, sir,} Nova said. Her voice remained calm, yet there was a subtle edge of urgency—a clear indicator of the rising danger. Though the tone didn’t suggest an immediate crisis, it was enough for Aron to recognize the need to wrap up the fight quickly to prevent any uncontrolled escalation, a scenario he was keen to avoid.

Nova then displayed the broadcast footage for him, showing the live feed being transmitted to the Conclave and the empire. The forces around him were highlighted in different colors, providing a visual explanation to viewers and clarifying the interplay of power that Aron was up against.

The feed displayed basic labels overlaid on the colored fields, offering just enough explanation to give the viewers insight without fully disclosing the mechanics of the abilities. Aron could see he was caught between two forces compressing inward, labeled Telekinesis and Gravity. The second label alone made it clear why Nova urged him to finish the fight swiftly

Aron’s shield could easily handle the telekinetic force bearing down on him; his mana reserves were more than capable of countering pressure even on an unimaginable scale. The real threat, however, was the gravitational attack. If this gravity field were mana-based, his shield would nullify it without issue. But Aron understood that the Galvinith symbiots didn’t rely on mana for their abilities—they channeled energy directly from the user’s stamina. This distinction meant the gravitational force couldn’t be intercepted by his shield’s usual mana-based defense. While the shield currently resisted the field’s pull, Aron knew it was only a matter of time before the gravity grew intense enough to bypass his defenses entirely, closing in on the point where it would press down upon him directly.

“I understand,” Aron replied and without hesitation, he generated a new shield, initially setting it to an open mode that allowed unrestricted movement in and out. Swiftly, he expanded its reach, forming a massive barrier spanning a kilometer in each direction. Once established, he switched the shield to lockdown mode, sealing it completely and preventing anything from either entering or escaping.

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The Galvinith sensed something shift in the atmosphere, triggering an immediate state of alert. However, when nothing materialized and the sensation faded after a brief moment, it redirected its

focus to the task at hand: crushing the emperor. Still, a sliver of its attention lingered on the source of that fleeting feeling, remaining vigilant for any sign of threat that might arise.

To the Galvinith's surprise, despite exerting the combined force of its telekinesis and gravity abilities—capable of crushing the exterior of a military ship, something it had successfully done before—the man before him maintained an expression that suggested he was unaffected by the onslaught. This led the Galvinith to wonder whether the emperor truly felt nothing, possessed the strength to withstand such pressure, or was merely putting on a façade to avoid embarrassment in front of his citizens.

So, it decided to double the intensity of its abilities, unconcerned about the toll on its stamina; unlike Aron, it had no subsequent fights to contend with, allowing it to unleash its full power without reservation.

However, just as it prepared to amplify its efforts, that small part of its mind, still alert for the source of its earlier unease, suddenly jolted it. As it scanned the area, its heart sank when it realized it was encased within a massive shield that had effectively severed its sensory range, limiting its awareness of everything inside the bubble.

Before it could react to the sudden shift in the situation, the Galvinith found itself propelled by an invisible force emanating from Aron's location. The sheer speed of the push slammed its body against the outer layer of the shield, trapping it between two solid barriers and attempting to crush it.

Thanks to its mangled exoskeleton, which resisted the tremendous forces trying to compress it, the Galvinith managed to cling to consciousness, but only for a moment. Almost immediately, the pressure surged exponentially, shattering its shell and forcing its organs to spill out. However, before any of the fallen remains could drop far, they landed on another shield that had materialized to catch every drop of blood and organ, preserving the remnants of the Galvinith fighter's body.

{Match over. Winner: Terran Empire, Aron Michael.} The AI referee's announcement echoed through the arena, reverberating with a finality that underscored the magnitude of the event. The Galvinith fighter, who had once seemed so powerful and confident, had perished before it could even comprehend what was happening to it.

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"I've become complacent and started treating this like a game," Aron mused, his eyes fixed on the shield that contained the remnants of the Galvinith fighter. He realized that, without the immediate threat to his life or the looming specter of war, he had fallen back into his old habits of caution and overthinking. This tendency had led him into trouble before, as he often let things unfold instead of taking decisive action when he had the power to change the outcome.

Chapter 776 Breaking the Shackles

{Took you long enough to figure that out,} Nova replied, a hint of amusement in her tone, making it clear she'd noticed this long before Aron had caught on himself.

"Why didn't you just tell me, so I could have corrected it earlier?" Aron asked, curious rather than surprised that Nova had already picked up on his habit.

{People rarely learn from mere warnings,} she explained with a tone that was almost like a teacher addressing a student's oversight. {Since your life wasn't actually at risk, I thought it would be more valuable for you to realize it on your own after experiencing the consequences firsthand.}

Aron chuckled at Nova's tone, but beneath the surface, he was scrutinizing each step he'd taken since the start of negotiations. Up to now, his actions had felt almost effortless, yet the recent fight had shifted that perception. This last opponent—whose abilities bypassed the usual mana-based defenses—had brought an unexpected level of danger, reminding Aron of a vulnerability within his current runic expertise.

He began to wonder: what if he encountered a situation similar to this, but one where the threat struck with an instant, devastating effect—far quicker than the gradual danger of the gravity ability? Something so swift he'd have no time to react, or an opponent just as exceptional as he was, but without holding back as he had been. All the limitations he faced were self-imposed, and carefully maintained to avoid stirring fear or conflict with the Conclave members.

After a moment of contemplating his actions, he asked Nova, "What's the probability that they'll unite against us if they see the full extent of my powers?" he asked, his tone measured but laced with genuine curiosity.

{Currently, they are already united, sir. The agreement that forms the Conclave represents the maximum level of cooperation they can achieve due to their varied interests. If they become frightened, the most they can do is attempt to sabotage you and the empire in ways that wouldn't justify a retaliatory strike from you. Without such justification, it would require you to confront the entire Conclave military force at once, which, as it stands, the empire is not yet fully equipped to handle.

Additionally, our technological advantages in certain areas, coupled with our access to mana stones, limit their options for sabotage. They risk losing access to the mana stones if they push too hard.

The primary change I foresee is that many of them will attempt to get closer to you, seeking to tie you to the Conclave or even persuade you to join. They are not the only players in this part of the galaxy, so their more overt actions will be limited; the more blatant their moves are, the greater the chance you might align with another faction. After witnessing your powers, they will be wary of opposing you,} Nova concluded, outlining her reasoning based on the current understanding of the Conclave's dynamics.

Aron raised an eyebrow in surprise at her explanation. "So the drawback is nothing different from what I expected?"

{Exactly. However, you'll need to take this seriously, as most of the upcoming opponents will possess formidable abilities that draw on various forms of energy or combinations of them. You need to exercise utmost caution to avoid any sudden fatalities,} Nova replied, her tone both informative and cautionary.

{Also, we've already secured the majority by winning eight fights. So, if you believe that facing certain racial abilities poses too great a risk given your current understanding of runes, you can always forfeit,} she added, blending her congratulations with a touch of sarcastic warning about the importance of preserving his life.

“I’ll keep that in mind,” Aron said with a chuckle, his gaze shifting to the container that had arrived to collect the remains of the Galvinith and its weapons. Moments later, the AI referee appeared, prompting the next step. {Would you like to use your break period, or shall we proceed to the next fight?}

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The viewers were still reeling from the rapid shift in the situation, having gone from witnessing the emperor's capture to seeing the Galvinith transformed into little more than an organ donor in a matter of seconds. Many struggled to comprehend how such a drastic turn of events had occurred, despite the replay being shown multiple times.

Those who managed to gather their thoughts more quickly recognized that, with this victory, Aron had secured the basic agreements with the Conclave forces. In theory, he could forfeit all the remaining matches, but most understood that this was the least likely scenario. The opponents still standing offered tantalizing technologies that Aron could potentially acquire should he emerge victorious.

When the AI referee posed such a foolish question, assuming Aron would take a moment to rest and recover, those who were already fully consumed by anger began shouting. Despite the question's irrelevance to them, it offered an outlet for their frustrations, and they were determined not to let the opportunity pass by.

But when Aron declared, “No need for rest; please bring in the next fighter,” something seemed to snap within the crowd. They had been subjected to a series of astonishing events, all stemming from this man who appeared to look down on them.

At that moment, the Conclave members found themselves united in their prayers for the next fighter to achieve victory. It didn't matter if it was someone from a civilization that had already been defeated or even someone whose civilizations hadn't participated in the war they all prayed in unison as they desperately needed to see Aron get taken down at least once. If every fighter from the Conclave fell to him, they feared they would lose all confidence, unable to hold their heads high in the aftermath of such an overwhelming defeat.

Yet, as they lifted their gazes to Aron's face, a chill ran down their spines. Despite his expression remaining unchanged from the usual calm demeanor he wore before previous fights, there was an unmistakable aura surrounding him this time. Something about his presence felt altered, and they couldn't shake the sense that this change boded ill for whoever would be stepping into the arena against him next. The realization settled in—their next opponent would be in for a far more daunting challenge than they had anticipated.

Chapter 777 The Erythians Sentient Weapon, NO: 70

As the Colosseum's shield parted, a colossal ship loomed into view, its engines rumbling as it glided into the Colosseum. It made its way to the designated landing area for the next challenger, casting an imposing shadow on its way.

The viewers held their breath, eager to see what kind of warrior would emerge from such a vessel, each of them hoping—perhaps futilely—that this one might be the fighter to finally give Aron a real test.

When the ship reached the designated landing zone, there was no sign of the usual, controlled fighter disembarkation. Instead, a massive, reinforced cube—70 meters on each side—was unceremoniously dropped onto the Colosseum floor. The Erythian ship then hastily retreated from the Colosseum, as if to put as much distance as possible between itself and the ominous container.

The cube itself was a masterpiece of high-end restraint engineering, with every inch of its surface crafted to hold something formidable inside. Observers who recognized the intricate detailing on the exterior immediately knew it was a creation of the Symmetra artisans, famous for their exacting standards and exorbitant fees. Their work required rare, precious materials, meaning whoever commissioned this containment was willing to pay dearly to keep its contents locked away—likely because it was too dangerous to be released lightly.

{You have five minutes to complete your preparations,} Just as the AI referee announced the five-minute preparation period, a sudden, thunderous BAM! echoed through the Colosseum. Viewers' hearts nearly leapt out of their chests as they saw the cube shudder, a section of its thick walls denting outward under a massive impact from inside. Whatever was contained within was already trying to escape, hammering against the walls with explosive force.

BAM! BAM! BAM! More powerful strikes followed in rapid succession, each one landing on the same weakened spot. With each hit, the dent grew, leaving spectators breathless, wondering if the cube would burst open at any moment. Many understood what this meant: if the creature broke out early, it would disqualify itself by attacking during the preparation period—a loss that would not sit well with the Astral Conclave viewers, who needed this fighter to put up a strong challenge against Aron.

Yet, just as the fear peaked, a faint hum emanated from the cube, and the dented metal began to shift, smoothing back into place as if the structure was made of memory alloy. Within moments, it looked as pristine as ever, as though it had never endured the relentless barrage.

A deep, resonant BWHOOOOOOOOOOO!!!!!! reverberated through the Colosseum, filling the air with a growl so powerful that it seemed to seep through the screens and grab hold of the viewers' instincts. The sound triggered an involuntary surge of fear, making the hairs on their necks stand on end. Some of the viewers clutched their seats in dread, while others found themselves edging back from the screen as if preparing to flee despite knowing they were safely watching a broadcast. A handful even bolted from their room, and a few even fainted under the wave of primal terror.

But as their initial fear ebbed, it was swiftly replaced by an unexpected surge of exhilaration. If the creature could inspire such fear through a mere broadcast, they reasoned, it had to be exceptionally powerful—perhaps powerful enough to stand against Aron. The Conclave's hope reignited, for in all of Aron's previous matches, none had elicited this visceral sense of dread.

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"Now that's more like it," Aron muttered, a glint of excitement in his eyes as he sensed the beast's pressure even from kilometers away. It was raw and intense, a force that seemed to pulse through the very ground beneath him.

{I know you're itching to go all out, but please, leave a few recognizable pieces behind for research,} Nova chimed in, her tone feigning a sarcastic plea. Despite her teasing, Aron knew she

was serious—she was well aware of his fondness for his explosion rune, potent enough to rival a nuclear detonation, as their practice matches had vividly demonstrated.

"I'll keep that in mind," Aron replied, focusing his gaze on the runes now circling him. He only activated two, careful not to waste mana unnecessarily. If the first two runes proved effective, the others would be unnecessary. The remaining ones hovered in reserve, ready to be infused with mana at a moment's notice, their connections allowing him to activate them even mid-flight if needed.

"Think that cube's made of nanomachines?" he asked, eyeing the feed as the beast's relentless blows dented the surface, only for it to reform as if untouched.

{Doubt it,} Nova replied, a hint of excitement in her voice. {The force it's taking would obliterate any typical nanomachine structure after a few hits, unless they had an endless supply to refill the damaged area. Given it's crafted by the Symmetra, it's more likely void energy tech mixed with exotic materials.} She couldn't hide her enthusiasm at the prospect of studying the Symmetra's technology—though first, they'd have to make it through whatever monstrous creature was currently contained within it.

Throughout this time the timer continued going down, showing only a few seconds left before the fight began.

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At five seconds to go, the cube's outer walls fell away with a heavy clang, each section spreading out like a colossal plus sign against the Colosseum floor. The monstrous creature inside finally came into full view — an abomination of twisted limbs and layered, chitinous armor, with eyes that glowed a sickly, luminescent yellow. Heavy mana-infused ropes bound it, glowing a fierce yellow as they strained to hold it in place. Yet, despite their power, the ropes looked perilously close to snapping, barely containing the beast's overwhelming rage and strength.

As the timer reached one, the ropes abruptly vanished in perfect synchronization with the AI referee's announcement: {You may begin.} Freed from its restraints, the Erythian creature let out a blood-curdling roar, shaking the Colosseum as it leaped forward, eyes locked on Aron, the only living target in sight. There was nothing in its mind but the primal urge for destruction, and Aron, standing calm and unyielding, was the first obstacle it aimed to obliterate.

The camera struggled to keep up, barely capturing the monster as it devoured the distance in mere milliseconds. Just as it seemed the beast would reach Aron in a heartbeat, a massive dust cloud erupted between them, obscuring everything in a dense veil. For a moment, even the camera was forced to pause, its lens struggling to penetrate the haze.

When the dust finally began to settle, the scene that emerged was almost too bizarre for the viewers to believe. The once-mindless, unstoppable creature, driven by an insatiable hunger for destruction, now stood frozen a full kilometer away from Aron. The emperor hadn't moved an inch, and yet, before him, the creature trembled visibly — paralyzed by a primal terror. It couldn't bring itself to move closer, nor did it dare turn away, as if caught in an invisible snare of dread.

Aron himself looked taken aback, eyebrows raised as he observed the creature's unexpected reaction. In the dead silence of the Colosseum, Aron muttered, "What the fu...?"

Chapter 778 Please Bring in the Next Fighter

To say Aron and every viewer watching were surprised would be an understatement; disbelief rippled through across countless screens. None of them could fully grasp what they were witnessing.

Among the Conclave viewers, those familiar with the top ten civilizations' military hierarchies recognized the significance of the creature's designation. They knew the Erythians reserved numerical rankings for only their most dangerous weapons — and the lower the number, the more devastating the power. For a weapon to hold a two-digit number meant it could contend with nearly any fighter among the top ten civilizations.

Yet here it was, frozen in terror before a single man, unable to move, fight, or flee.

Though Sentient Weapon No. 70 wasn't the most powerful of the Erythians' biological creations, it was supposed to be formidable enough to stand against any of the Empire's fighters. Even if it lacked higher intelligence, its design ensured it could contend with the Xor'Vak's lower-ranking royals. The Erythians had never witnessed any of their weapons, regardless of ranking, showing fear—especially as they were engineered without even the capacity to feel it. These sentient weapons were made to fight relentlessly, a trait that had deterred many civilizations from crossing paths with the Erythians.

Now, however, seeing No. 70 frozen in terror left the Erythians both mystified and uneasy. Their shock mingled with fear, curiosity, and a flicker of excitement—particularly among their researchers. For the latter, this aberrant behavior sparked a thrilling possibility: that there could be an unknown factor influencing their creations, which could lead to advancements in crafting the ultimate sentient weapon.

For the remaining Erythians and Conclave viewers, the initial excitement and confidence they had in Sentient Weapon No. 70's strength had crashed into bitter disillusionment. Watching their prized creation paralyzed in front of Aron was a blow to their pride—and for many, the humiliation stung deeply. What had begun as a fight they were certain would turn the tide had now become a spectacle of defeat, and the hope that once soared high had plummeted straight to the core of their spirits. Some viewers, unable to stomach the unfolding disgrace, decided to turn off their screens entirely, unwilling to watch what felt like a public shaming of their might and pride.

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"Looks like your wish is going to be granted beyond your expectations," Aron said, following the debrief on the situation and the hypothesis they had developed together. In an instant, he vanished from the camera's view, only to reappear on the opposite side, holding what appeared to be the creature's head. The sight was surreal—one hand clutching a head so large it looked like two oversized containers stacked together. The real feat, however, lay in the shield surrounding it, securing the grip, and a flight rune lifting its immense weight, though Aron had no intention of revealing these details to the audience.

Without waiting for the AI referee's announcement to conclude, he called out, "Hurry up; it can't last much longer." The imposing stance of him holding the creature's head may have projected an image of effortless strength, but Aron was working intently behind the scenes. Mana flowed steadily into a healing rune he had crafted, ensuring the head's condition remained viable for just a few moments more. This delicate balance kept the brain from shutting down completely, granting the

statis containers enough time to collect it in pristine form for possible resuscitation or critical research.

The entire process wrapped up in under ten minutes, with the empire securing not only the creature's remains but even the reinforced containment box it had arrived in—now officially their property. Only six factions remained: the Xor'Vaks, the Valthorins, the Trinarrians, the Symmetra, the Zelvora, and the Shadari.

Without waiting for the AI referee's prompt, Aron called out, "Please bring in the next fighter." Now that he was fully committed to finishing the series, he aimed to complete each fight swiftly. Every minute he allowed them to regroup was another moment for the Conclave forces to potentially interfere or devise a disruptive strategy, and Aron was determined to prevent any such obstacles from gaining traction.

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They say that no plan, no matter how intricate, can withstand overwhelming power—and what was happening on the field seemed to prove this adage true.

Aron was now facing a Symmetra fighter whose entire body appeared like a patchwork of metals and machinery, with every weak spot meticulously reinforced by high-tech augmentations. Yet calling this clash a "fight" would be generous; it was more of a one-sided beatdown.

Initially, things looked different. Aron had unleashed a powerful wind spell, sharp enough to form a tornado that would skewer anything in its path. But the Symmetra fighter had thwarted the assault with a barrier fueled by their racial ability—void energy. This energy, unique to the Symmetra, disrupted mana-based attacks, scattering the mana particles and rendering the spell useless.

Each successive attack met a similar fate, revealing the full extent of void energy's ability to dismantle any mana-infused assault before it could even reach the target.

Initially, the crowd thought the emperor had finally met his match. The Symmetra fighter had proven resilient, nullifying Aron's powerful wind spell and sending back void bullets that could drain an opponent's mana upon contact. These bullets posed a serious threat: if enough of them hit their mark, they could lead to mana starvation, causing any fighter reliant on mana to faint from exhaustion. But despite the potential danger, none of the void bullets even grazed Aron as he dodged or deflected them with precision.

Aron, however, wasn't merely testing the waters. Within seconds, he unleashed over two thousand spells in rapid succession, each aimed at the Symmetra fighter from different angles and on varied trajectories. Some spells activated mid-air, generating explosive effects around the others to test the shield. Aron's meticulous coordination ensured that all the spells converged on the fighter simultaneously, challenging the Symmetra's ability to disperse mana. The sheer number of attacks forced his opponent to expend vast amounts of his limited void energy to nullify each incoming spell, quickly wearing him down.

At first, the Symmetra managed to maintain his pace, even attempting counterattacks. But Aron's relentless barrage soon revealed a critical flaw—the Symmetra's defenses couldn't target every spell individually under such intense assault. The fighter's timing faltered, creating a split-second opening.



Aron seized the moment, activating a lightning spell that bypassed the defenses entirely. The spell struck with pinpoint accuracy, overwhelming the organic parts of the Symmetra fighter's body. Though his augmented parts withstood the hit, the energy surge damaged his brain, causing it to shut down instantly.

In a flash, the Symmetra warrior fell—an abrupt, decisive end that left the spectators in shock. The emperor had won yet again, proving that overwhelming power could unravel even the most impenetrable defenses.