

Zompiewolf 751

Chapter 751 Checkmate (2)

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The room was shrouded with tension as Ashton stood face-to-face against Kro'Han. It felt like a nightmare as shock momentarily seized Ashton. But he realised it wasn't the time to freeze and regathered his composure before lunging towards Kro'Han, unleashing a powerful punch fueled by every ounce of strength he could muster.

"You fool," Kro'Han smiled. Yet, Kro'Han's reaction defied Ashton's expectations. Instead of blocking or dodging the attack, Kro'Han laughed off Ashton's attempt and delivered a backhand with a dismissive wave of his hand that sent Ashton hurtling to the far end of the room. Ashton's momentum only stopped thanks to the reinforced walls of the chamber, made specifically to hold Kro'Han within. Still, the impact left Ashton's imprint on the wall as he crumpled to the floor, the wind knocked out of his lungs.

The pain that surged through Ashton's body was staggering; his vision blurred, and he felt like passing out. But Ashton knew he couldn't stand down. If he did, it would be the end of everyone he loved, and he wouldn't give up for their sakes. "You never learn, do you?" Kro'Han scoffed, watching Ashton get back to his feet. "But then again, your father was the same. He tried to stop me over and over, and yet, here I am, about to rule the universe."

Ashton struggled to respond, the pain and anger rendering him momentarily speechless. However, something caught his attention – Kro'Han's prosthetic limbs. One of his legs and hands had been replaced with chunks of metal Ashton had never seen before. While Kro'Han could have been injured by anything, Ashton knew who made him like that. It had to be his masters who were long gone now. But even through death, they had helped him once again.

'I'm pathetic, aren't I?'

The realisation fueled Ashton's resolve. His masters had given their lives to make his inevitable fight a fraction easier, and there he was, pathetically staring at Kro'Han.

However, his weakness made him realise one thing... He couldn't afford to succumb to despair. As he remembered his masters' parting words, the pain, the anger, everything faded compared to the newfound determination that surged through him. If nothing else, Ashton vowed to strip Kro'Han of his remaining limbs.

With a burst of energy, Ashton launched himself towards Kro'Han, who was now approaching Astaroth. A solid punch landed on Kro'Han's face, causing him to take several steps backwards. Unlike Ashton, Kro'Han didn't get flung away, but it was enough to let Kro'Han know of his intentions. Ashton wasn't going down without a fight, just like his masters didn't. "There's an old saying on Earth," Ashton smirked through panting breaths. "Don't count your chickens before they hatch, fucker."

Unfazed by Ashton's words, Kro'Han touched the area where Ashton's punch landed with a twisted smile. "I take my words back. You're not like your father," he said. "After all, he wasn't half as stupid as you."

Adopting a defensive stance, Ashton prepared for Kro'Han's retaliation, but it never came. Instead, Kro'Han conjured a throne and seated himself, turning his attention towards Astaroth. However, Astaroth interjected before Kro'Han could say his piece.

"I did my part like you wanted," Astaroth asserted. "Now free Linea-"

"Not so fast, Astaroth," Kro'Han interrupted with a sadistic smile. "I will free her, but once you kill Ashton, and this time, do it properly."

"That wasn't the deal-" Astaroth took a threatening step forward.

"Like you said, plans change. Now do it, or else say goodbye to your sister," Kro'Han replied, relishing the power he held over Astaroth. "Besides, your value in my eyes has dropped significantly. I couldn't care less about you; the same couldn't be said about your sister. She is the key to making you do my bidding, but I'm willing to part with her if you kill my dearest nephew."

"...you better keep your word."

Astaroth, begrudgingly acknowledging Kro'Han's leverage, summoned his aura blades, preparing for the inevitable confrontation with Ashton. It wasn't what he wanted, but Astaroth was willing to do anything for Linea's sake.

Ashton, sensing the hostility, mirrored Astaroth, forging an aura blade of his own. After Balmond's destruction, there was nothing else Ashton could use to withstand the brunt of Astaroth's attacks.

Meanwhile, Kro'Han sat regally on his throne, awaiting the unfolding battle. He had lied to Astaroth again, and the desperate fool believed him. Why would he give up Linea and lose control over his puppet?

But the Xyran was blinded by love and didn't care about anything but his 'sister'. While having Astaroth on his side had advantages, Kro'Han primarily tormented him because of the threat he gave him on Euphoria. Meanwhile, Ashton lunged forward, a swift and calculated attack aimed at Astaroth. The clash

of aura blades resonated as the adversaries fought with blades. Each strike was met with a counter, the combatants locked in a relentless exchange of blows.

Astaroth, though conflicted, displayed a formidable prowess with his aura blades. He parried Ashton's attacks with precision, his movements a testament to the training and skill he had acquired over the years. Fueled by anger and purpose, Ashton pressed on, determined to break through Astaroth's defences.

Kro'Han, seated on his throne, observed the clash with a nasty grin. The unfolding chaos before him amused the Precursor as he revelled in the conflict he had sown amongst the two people who could've defeated him.

It was a hilarious sight. It didn't matter who won. According to the prophecy Seraphina made, if either Ashton or Astaroth died, then no one would be able to stop him. "Having fun, huh?" Ashton taunted Kro'Han. "Don't worry, this won't last for long. After we're done here, it will be your turn."

"Keep your eyes on your opponent," Kro'Han scoffed as Astaroth leaned in for another attack. "or is there no other Earth idiom you can apply to this situation?"

Drawing upon reserves of strength he never knew he possessed, Ashton unleashed a barrage of strikes. His attacks were relentless, each swing calculated to exploit Astaroth's known vulnerabilities. But each of his attacks fell apart. Amid the battle, Astaroth seized an opening, launching a counteraimed at Ashton's flank. The room echoed with the clang of colliding blades as Ashton was caught off guard and staggered backwards. The momentum had shifted, and Astaroth pressed on, determined to fulfil his end of the sinister bargain imposed by Kro'Han.

Suddenly, Ashton was on the back foot. Astaroth was pulling ridiculous moves, and still, they seemed to work. Kro'Han seemed to notice something odd but didn't pay attention to it. As long as either one of them lost their life, he would win, and that was the only thing on his mind.

The next moment, Ashton lost balance and fell. Astaroth loomed over him with his blade mere inches away from his throat. Kro'Han smiled, believing he had won. "Kill him!" he yelled, growing impatient. Astaroth glanced at Kro'Han for a moment before nodding. He raised his aura blade as if preparing to land the final blow. But instead, Astarophth offered Ashton a hand.

"Is it done?" he asked Ashton while pulling him up. "Yup, just received the news," Ashton replied, pulling a micro-communicator from his ear. "Linea is safe and on her way home with Ibis. We can drop the act now."