

As we continued clashing, Brainiac began to adapt, and within little time he had recovered his ground.

“I can’t understand you. No matter what I do, how much I prepare, you still manage to surmount my expectations,” began Brainiac as he took some space from me, “How do you do it?”

I cracked my neck, my legs parting slightly for better support as I waited for Brainiac to make his next move. “For someone who seeks infinite knowledge, you’re pretty dumb.”

Brainiac said nothing, glaring at me without a hint of emotion, before blasting towards me, swinging his blade in a circular motion.

Seeing through his attack, I parried his advance easily with one hand and attacked with the other. Brainiac dodged the attack in turn by jumping back.

Then, Brainiac moved forward, grabbing my hand before sending me into the air. Taking hold of my situation, I maneuvered out of the air easily, stopping a few meters away, just in time to see Brainiac pounce on me again.

Getting back into a fighting stance, I weaved away without difficulty, avoiding several punches and kicks before being surprised by a missile at point-blank range.

The missile collided with me, leaving me no time to dodge, creating an explosion of massive proportions.

"How interesting..." I muttered, as the smoke of the explosion cleared out, revealing I was unharmed. I had used the rings at the last moment to isolate the explosion, receiving only minimal damage. "If you had started this fight, fighting like this, you might have stood a chance."

Brainiac frowned.

Lighting my rings up, I moved, this time it was my turn to attack, so I pressed forward, raining on Brainiac with everything I had.

Brainiac parried and slipped for a long time to the best of his ability, before getting an elbow in the stomach, which made him spit.

"Between us, that seems like a design flaw, I mean, why would you make yourself be able to feel pain? And if you had to, why would you make yourself emulate the response?"

Brainiac said nothing, instead, he gasped for a short time, glaring at me for a moment before he attacked with one of his blades.

I dodged, breaking the base of his cybernetic blades, before kicking Brainiac away. Then, as Brainiac tried to recover, I moved forward.

Face-to-face, fast and powerful blows were exchanged at breakneck speed, as the shock waves of our clash were felt throughout the planet. Finally, after several moments, where seemingly neither of us had no advantage over the other, we separated.

"This battle has gone for long enough," Brainiac said, his eyes narrowing a bit. "Time to show you the full extent of my power. You were right, if I had taken this seriously from the start, we wouldn't be here."

I said nothing, taking on another defensive stance. And without another word, Brainiac attacked, with a sense of confidence so big that it was almost palpable.

I waited for Brainiac to reach me and then began to avoid his first strike by grabbing his neck with my right hand and slamming him into the ground.

"You're not living up to your own hype, Brainiac," I said, arms crossed as the android began to stand up.

"Resistance is futile, I will win, and I will claim the universe and everything outside it," Brainiac boasted, his body crackling with electricity.

All of a sudden, he felt more dangerous.

I smiled, uncrossing his arms. "Of one thing you were right, this battle has gone on for long enough." Having said that, I pressed forward at full speed.

Brainiac moved to meet me midway, attempting to cut my head off with his blades but failed to do so, instead receiving a knee that hit him in the stomach.

Brainiac recovered quickly and counterattacked with a broad and precise movement, blasting me away into the planet's surface with a violent crash.

The android pushed forward, intending to press his advance, I would give him no chance.

"Back!" I shouted, blasting him away as I recovered my ground. Brainiac, having lost his momentum, growled before releasing a ball of energy at me.

I slapped it away. I was getting used to his weapons, and how I had to use mine to be effective against him.

"Time to die," Brainiac then suddenly muttered, appearing behind me, and blasting me with a point-blank beam of energy.

Brainiac laughed in victory.

I chuckled, cutting his victorious laugh short revealing I was standing, still in perfect condition, amid the dust that was quickly dissipating. Holding a small shield of energy from my rings behind my back, the shield being lightly burned and scorched, smoking because of the attack.

"You really thought that would work?" I asked with a smile, not even looking back. "It's like you're not even trying anymore."

Brainiac took a step back, and for the first time since I had known him, I saw fear in his eyes.

"Thanks to you, and your preparations. I learned to control the energies of my rings to the point I can ignore your defenses, so do try your best to dodge these," I said, turning around.

Then, before Brainiac could fully grasp what I had meant, a multitude of beams sprung from my fingers: a rainbow of red, green, and blue.

Each beam was narrow, and very fast, zooming straight to Brainiac.

Brainiac began to dodge, not without difficulty, having multiple beams scratch him as he weaved through my assault.

Then, as he was about to be cornered, he disappeared out of sight.

Just like before. He had moved out of sight.

And knowing him, he will appear behind me.

I grinned, I might as well use this to my advantage.

As predicted, Brainiac appeared behind me, summoning one of his all-cutting blades. Then, in a clean, precise movement, he cut through me, from my right shoulder down to my waist.

However, before he could retract his arm, I grabbed it with my remaining arm. Brainiac tried to escape, but no matter how much he tried, I did not allow any motion to be made.

"That hurt," I said, using my blue ring to reattach and heal the parts of my body he had cut, leaving only his blade and arm inside of my abdomen, by holding his arm tight. "But it made easier what comes next."

Before Brainiac could ponder on that thought, I pierced his chest with my right arm.

"This... this can't be...." Brainiac muttered.

“I would say go to hell, but we both know you don’t have a soul,” I replied, blasting Brainiac from the inside out, destroying his entire body in a flaming explosion.

I coughed, dropping to the ground out of exhaustion. To think Brainiac could have won that if he had played to his strengths, using his vast resources to tire me, and eventually kill me.

I guess I’m lucky he wasn’t all that smart. Or perhaps he was smart, just not wise.

Who cares anyway?

“Bravo, that was outstanding!” That voice... Lucifer.

“You enjoyed the show?” I asked, dropping to the ground on my back.

“I most certainly did, you went from getting your buttock kicked to kicking whatever he had instead of an ass,” Lucifer clapped, a proud smile on his face.

“Buttock? That has to be the most British shit you have ever said to me,” I rolled my eyes, breathing like I had run a marathon, without superpowers.

“So, ready to go back to the bar? And you know, get the pretty girl,” Lucifer teased, but I didn’t care. I did in fact want to go back to the bar to get the pretty girl.

“I do,” I replied with a tired nod.