

## A Viable Strategy

\_\_\_\_\_The barracks were brimming with life. Excitement spread through the soldiers like an infection. Everyone was talking, whether in boisterous shouts, hushed musings or wagers being made; no one could get the upcoming Trials match off their lips. A bloodsport that had quickly taken the world by storm and proved especially popular among anyone looking for quick fame and fortune. Even the AI, tasked with assisting in the everyday duties of man, felt the excitement jolt through their cores. Amongst this buzz, two AI eagerly discussed the upcoming match.

“A...tactical hug?” The swirling amethyst ball of data paused as if to contemplate a moment.

“Yeah! Sounds cool doesn’t it? A flashy spectacle perfect for the Trials,” came the yellow, smaller orb, its data flashing.

“You expect me to believe they’ve been working on...hugging for an entire month? Alice, please tell me you’re joking.”

“It’s not just a hug,” Alice said, its synthetic voice raising in annoyance. “It’s a tactical hug.”

“Repeating the name doesn’t actually explain what it is. Except for the hugging part”

“You’re too hung up on the hugging part, V. You’re not focusing enough on the tactical part.”

Dark red lines of data pulsated around the small yellow orb before dying down.

“The hug is just the opener, helps ‘em get close.”

“Then what’s the closer?”

“An Explosion!”

“...”

“I knew it, you’re rendered speechless by its brilliance.”

“Brilliance isn’t exactly the word I would use.”

“You don’t think it’s a good move? V, it’s practically genius. It’s never been done before.”

“Probably because it involves blowing oneself to hell.”

“We both know the limiters won’t actually let anyone die in the Trials. Plus, I hear they’ve got some new armor that’ll let them survive it. In a manner of speaking.”

“And what happens when this armor fails and the match ends with no winners. At that point this tactical hug you keep fawning over is less a show-stopper and more a show-ender.”

“Come on V, you’re not even giving it a chance.”

“I’m not giving it a chance because the act of blowing yourself up seems like the most idiotic, small-minded and dangerous thing someone can do. Even in the Trials.”

“ ... ”

“ ... ”

“All I’m saying is that it’s a viable strategy.”

*Prompt: This short piece was one of several exercises I put myself through to help portray personality better through dialogue.*