

Tyrant 118

Chapter 118: Widow's Whisper

The cavern was silent at last.

The eight-meter spider lay sprawled across the stone, its ichor forming black pools that steamed faintly in the violet glow of the mythrill veins. Above, the ceiling still shimmered with countless red eyes—but most had receded after the death of their matriarch. From thousands, only a few hundred lingered now, watching, waiting, but unwilling to descend.

Garrika collapsed onto the ground, landing hard on her backside. Her chest rose and fell in heavy breaths, sweat and blood mingling on her skin. The feral glow had left her eyes; the fury of Berserk drained her until nothing remained. She had returned to her humanoid shape, though her wolf tail still twitched faintly and her pointed ears flicked at every sound. Her claws were gone, replaced by trembling hands caked in dried ichor.

"Finally... over," she muttered, leaning her head back against the stone wall. For the first time since they had entered the cavern, her tone wasn't fierce—it was simply tired.

Augusto wasn't far. He, too, had shed his beast form, the fur receding until only his tail and ears remained, his frame back to its leaner humanoid shape. Unlike Garrika, however, he looked almost untouched. Aside from blood matting his shirt and arms, he bore no serious wounds, and his breathing was steady. He had fought like Trafalgar: minimal mana use, relying on strength and precision instead of raw techniques.

Garrika turned her head slightly toward Trafalgar. He was still atop the spider's corpse, Maledicta gleaming faintly in his hand, his posture rigid. Her lips curved faintly despite her exhaustion. "You know... I had that thing cornered. You just stole my kill."

The attempt at teasing ended with a long, tired sigh. She let herself slump lower, her legs stretched out across the dirt.

"Drink," Augusto said simply. He knelt beside her, pulling a glass bottle of water from his oversized pack. Garrika took it wordlessly, tilting her head back and drinking until her breathing steadied again.

Still, Trafalgar hadn't moved. His silhouette stood framed by torchlight and mythrill glow, a lone figure atop the fallen beast. He hadn't spoken, hadn't descended—his eyes remained fixed on the cavern entrance, as if he were waiting.

Trafalgar finally shifted his stance, Maledicta sliding to his left hand. His right lifted slowly, palm open. A whisper of dark light shimmered, and in the next breath, a second weapon materialized—sleek, curved, and deadly.

Widow's Whisper.

The dagger pulsed faintly as mana flowed into it, the edge glowing like a shadow given form. Trafalgar's gaze never left the cavern entrance. His instincts screamed, sharpened by the silence.

He whispered to no one, voice low and cold. "I knew you were there."

His arm snapped forward.

Swosh!

The dagger cut the air in a perfect line. In less than a heartbeat, it struck. A faint crack echoed as steel buried itself into a throat—an elf with a crossbow hidden just beyond the entrance. The man's eyes went wide, a gurgle escaping before he collapsed backward, weapon slipping uselessly from his hands.

Widow's Whisper vanished instantly, dissolving into motes of shadow as it returned to Trafalgar's inventory.

The cavern froze.

A young, panicked voice broke the silence. "Shit! He's dead!"

From the entrance, figures began to emerge—nine now, where there had been ten. Torchlight illuminated their faces. At the center stood the brown-haired boy Trafalgar had noticed earlier in the mine. His age was close to Trafalgar's own, but his posture was arrogant, cushioned by the wall of mercenaries around him.

An elven soldier immediately stepped in front of him, blade raised. "Young master, behind me!" His tone was sharp, protective.

Garrika blinked, still catching her breath, but her eyes narrowed at the sight of the intruders. Augusto straightened silently, his tail flicking once as he rested a clawed hand on the strap of his heavy pack.

The mercenaries shuffled, glancing uneasily at the spider's corpse and at the lone figure still standing atop it. From above, Trafalgar's silhouette was almost unearthly—a man in blood-soaked armor, framed by the glow of mythrill veins, eyes glinting coldly in the dark.

He didn't shout, didn't posture. His voice rolled down from above, steady and sharp as a blade.

"What do you want?"

The words cut through the cavern louder than any roar.

The young man stepped forward, his escorts shifting uneasily around him. The torchlight revealed his sharp features, his brown hair falling neatly across his forehead, his expression painted with indignation more than fear.

"I am Leon von Mariven," he declared, his voice carrying loudly across the cavern. "Son of Andrew von Mariven, lord of Mariven Port." His gaze fixed on Trafalgar like he was pronouncing judgment. "You've committed murder here today. For that crime, you will be judged accordingly. Surrender now and come peacefully. Resist, and you will be subdued."

The elf standing before him raised his blade slightly higher, murmuring low so that only Leon and those closest might hear: "Young master, he has already seen through us. He knows."

Leon's jaw tightened, but he didn't falter. "Leave it to me," he whispered back, before raising his voice again. "This is your final chance."

Trafalgar remained perfectly still. From atop the spider's corpse, Maledicta rested loosely in his hand, its dark blade glinting faintly under the torchlight. His eyes never left Leon's, cold and unreadable.

"You think I didn't notice?" Trafalgar's tone was low, sharp as broken glass. "Your man was loading a crossbow and aiming for me. I didn't murder anyone. I simply let him choke on his own intent."

The mercenaries shuffled again, unease spreading like cracks in glass. Killing one of them from that distance, with a single throw—it had been too fast, too precise. None of them wanted to admit aloud that they hadn't even seen him move.

Leon's throat bobbed as he swallowed, but his arrogance shielded his fear. He leaned toward his remaining guards, whispering just loud enough for them. "When he lowers his guard, we attack. Don't hesitate."

His words carried the certainty of someone who had never bled, someone who had never seen what true killing intent looked like.

And from atop the monstrous corpse, Trafalgar's laughter broke the silence. It wasn't loud, but it carried, a sharp chuckle that echoed eerily in the cavern.

The mercenaries tensed. Leon's face stiffened.

He had expected anger, denial, perhaps even fear. But laughter?

The echo of Trafalgar's laughter died slowly, swallowed by the cavern walls. Every torchlight flickered uneasily, shadows dancing across the blood-soaked ground.

Then, with a single step, he descended from the hulking spider's corpse. His boots hit the stone lightly. The mercenaries tightened their formation instinctively as he approached, their torches trembling in their hands.

The flames revealed him more clearly now. His [Shadowhide Leather Armor] was drenched in blood and venom, dark stains splattered across every surface. The stench of death clung to him, thick and suffocating. Yet his face was immaculate, untouched by gore. His eyes, deep blue and cold, fixed on Leon with an unshakable calm. His black hair remained tied neatly in a low ponytail, as though the chaos of battle had never touched him.

The mercenaries faltered, some averting their gazes. To them, he looked less like a man and more like a predator that had just claimed its kill.

Trafalgar's lips curved faintly, but his thoughts were sharper. 'They probably still believe I'm stronger than all of them because I finished the beast. It was already crippled, already dying—but only a fool wouldn't seize that chance. I have to take advantage of the situation, otherwise all three of us are dead.'

Leon cleared his throat, trying to reassert his authority. "Good. You're rational enough to come down and speak." His voice cracked slightly, betraying the unease he fought to suppress.

Trafalgar stopped a few paces away, Maledicta resting casually at his side. The torches illuminated the gleam of the blade—blue and black, like night wrapped around steel.

His gaze locked with Leon's. The cavern fell silent, every eye on the boy standing between the corpse of a monster and a company of mercenaries.

Then, Trafalgar's voice rang out, cold and clear.

"Pleased to meet you, Leon von Mariven," he said. "I am Trafalgar du Morgain."