

Tyrant 129

Chapter 129: Sparring

Trafalgar's brows furrowed. 'Great. Two against one, huh? Lucky me, it also reminds me of the two bosses you had to beat in a game... a fat guy and a skinny guy.'

He wasn't afraid, but neither was he thrilled. For him, everything was about survival. Winning was nice, but living to fight another day was the real goal. Still, this was just sparring—no death on the line. He exhaled, centering himself.

"Ready?" Xavier asked.

"Yeah," Trafalgar replied, tightening his grip.

The match began in a blur. Trafalgar stepped in with [Arc Slash], a dark-blue crescent tearing forward. Xavier's real spear parried the attack smoothly, while the projection darted in from the side, its weapon thrusting toward Trafalgar's ribs.

He twisted, Maledicta intercepting the strike with a clang of steel. The momentum pushed him back a step.

'Tch. They're coordinated. One defends, the other attacks. Feels almost like fighting in a raid party back in the old days... except I'm solo.'

The projection circled as Xavier pressed forward, forcing Trafalgar to guard from two angles at once. Each thrust of the spear was clean and deliberate, leaving little room to counter.

For a simple spar, the pressure was real. Trafalgar's heart raced—not from fear, but from the rush of being tested in a way he hadn't expected this morning.

The clash of steel echoed across the training grounds. Xavier moved with the fluid confidence of a seasoned spear user, his real self striking with measured precision while the projection mirrored him, relentless and unyielding.

Trafalgar parried a thrust, sparks flickering as Maledicta met the spear's tip. But before he could breathe, the projection came from the opposite side, forcing him to twist and block again. His arms vibrated with the constant rhythm of impact.

'This is ridiculous. It's like fighting two raid bosses with no party to back me up. Just me and my sword... not exactly fair, huh?'

Gritting his teeth, he pushed mana through Maledicta. A ripple of dark pressure burst forward.

[Severing Fang] the ground split open in a jagged line, tearing a clean diagonal scar across the field.

The real Xavier danced back with agile footwork, eyes gleaming with excitement. The projection wasn't so lucky. The strike caught it across the torso, its form flickering violently as if its data had been corrupted, but he hadn't defeated it yet.

'Got a good hit.'

He followed with a flurry of slashes, moving faster than he expected his body to handle. Each cut was sharp, efficient, exactly where it needed to be. He could feel his breakthrough pushing his limits upward.

The hologram stumbled under the assault, defending clumsily compared to Xavier.

"Not bad!" Xavier called out, grinning as his spear swept at Trafalgar again.

Trafalgar blocked, the force sending a tremor through his arm. 'He's still stronger than I thought... but at least I can break that fake version of him. If I take it out, this becomes winnable.'

He adjusted his stance, sweat dripping down his brow. The duel was just beginning to heat up.

Trafalgar steadied his breathing, eyes locked on the projection. It looked like Xavier, but its movements were less fluid, almost mechanical. If he was going to survive this spar, he needed to cut down the fake first.

He drew mana into Maledicta, the blade humming as shadows coiled along its edge. His stance shifted, muscles tensing.

[Morgain's Requiem] he exploded forward.

The blade danced in a deadly rhythm, each slash releasing a curved wave of shadow.

Slash! The first arc carved deep into the projection's side, making its body flicker.

Slash! Another cut split across its chest, the false spear clattering uselessly against Maledicta's storm.

Slash! More and more waves tore into it, the sequence relentless, his body moving almost on instinct.

The training field filled with streaks of black energy, the sound of tearing wind ringing louder than Xavier's voice cheering him on.

With a final sweep, Maledicta unleashed a spiraling wave that ripped through the projection's core. The figure shuddered violently, its outline breaking apart before bursting into scattered motes of light that dissolved into the morning air.

He looked up to see Xavier still standing tall, twirling his spear casually, as if the destruction of his copy hadn't fazed him at all.

"Well done," Xavier called with genuine admiration. "Not many can break through it."

Trafalgar rose back to his feet, tightening his grip on Maledicta.

He channeled mana recklessly, forcing it to gather at the blade's edge. Shadows swirled violently, forming the beginnings of a massive inverted crescent. The ground cracked beneath his feet, the pressure of the attack enough to make the training field feel suddenly suffocating.

[Morgain's Final Crescent] or at least, that's what he tried to unleash.

But the energy wavered. His control slipped. The crescent shuddered, unstable, breaking apart before it could fully manifest. Black motes hissed into the air, the half-formed slash never reaching its mark.

Trafalgar grit his teeth, sweat dripping down his chin. 'It seems that I had too much expectation... it is still too early to be able to use it.'

Still, the ominous aura it had released was undeniable. Xavier's expression, so calm until now, hardened. His grip tightened on the spear, his mismatched eyes narrowing with a trace of unease.

"That's enough," Xavier declared suddenly, lowering his weapon. His tone was sharp, decisive. "I yield. This is a sparring match—I'd rather not gamble with my life on... whatever that was."

The unstable energy faded completely, leaving only the sound of Trafalgar's ragged breathing. He fell backward onto the ground, landing flat on his backside.

"You... bastard," he groaned, half laughing despite himself. "What the hell was that cheat skill of yours? Seriously, who fights with a damn hologram like that?"

Xavier chuckled faintly, though his gaze turned distant, tinged with melancholy. "That projection... it isn't just a skill." His voice softened. "It's my brother."

The words hung heavy in the air, silencing Trafalgar more effectively than any attack. 'How that can be his brother?'