

Tyrant 130

Chapter 130: Warden of Echoes

Trafalgar's brows furrowed. "Your brother?"

Xavier gave a faint nod, the morning sun glinting against his sweat-soaked hair. "Oh, yes... it's because of my class."

"Your class?"

The training field fell into silence for a long moment. Trafalgar tilted his head, curious, but didn't press. He had learned quickly that people only revealed things when they wanted to. Forcing answers usually brought trouble.

Xavier, however, seemed to wrestle with himself. His mismatched eyes lowered, and when he spoke again, his voice carried a weight heavier than before. "It's because of my class."

Trafalgar stayed quiet.

"My class is called Warden of Echoes."

Trafalgar blinked. "Sounds badass."

Xavier's lips twitched in a brief smile, though it faded almost instantly. "It is. But it's also... cruel."

He turned his spear in his hand, as if gathering courage. "My main class is [Spearman], the spear path. But strangely... I awakened my second class before it. That doesn't usually happen. It only did because of what I went through at the time."

Trafalgar folded his arms, thoughtful. 'Second awakenings are supposed to connect to the first class, right? Also second awakening before his first? Strange... but then again, I'm hardly one to talk. I'm a Riftspawn. And I shouldn't even exist here in this world.'

He shook his head slightly, clearing the thought.

Xavier glanced up. "Does it bother you if I tell you this?"

"Oh, no," Trafalgar replied quickly. "Honestly, I'm glad you're sharing it. If I'm quiet, it's because I'm listening. I'm curious."

A genuine smile spread across Xavier's face for the first time that morning. "Then listen well. Because this is where it gets complicated."

Xavier planted the butt of his spear into the ground and rested his hand on top of it. His voice was steady, but there was a trace of hesitation in his eyes.

"My class allows me to keep what I call Echoes. Think of them as... copies of people."

Trafalgar tilted his head. "That could be useful. You could copy Althea, for example. Imagine having an echo of her around."

For a moment Xavier's expression softened—then turned somber. He shook his head. "I wish it were that simple. But the truth is cruel. I can only keep the Echo of someone who's already dead. And not just anyone—I have to share a bond with them first with certain conditions."

The words struck Trafalgar silent.

Xavier's mismatched eyes lowered. "When I awakened, as I said it wasn't [Spearman] that came first. It was this class. [Warden of Echoes]. And the first Echo I gained... was my brother's."

A silence fell between them, heavier than before.

"My brother died saving me," Xavier continued. "And that projection you fought earlier—that was him. Or at least, a fragment of him. His last act became part of my strength. Every time I summon him... I'm reminded of that moment."

Trafalgar gripped Maledicta loosely at his side, unsure what to say. 'So that's why... it's not just a skill. It's him carrying a ghost into every battle. A unique class, but twisted. Cruel, just like he said.'

Finally, he exhaled softly. "I'm sorry for your loss."

Xavier's lips curved into a faint, appreciative smile. "Don't worry. It's been a long time. But... thank you."

The weight in his voice told Trafalgar everything—this was not a wound that ever truly healed.

Xavier straightened his scarf, the melancholy in his eyes fading into the calm mask he had worn earlier. "Well, I'll see you in class, Trafalgar. You may not have noticed, but we share more than a few."

Trafalgar gave a small shrug. "Didn't know. Haven't really paid much attention to who's around."

Xavier chuckled at that, lifting his spear onto his shoulder. "Then maybe you'll start now. Until later."

"Yeah. Until later I guess."

The crimson-haired boy walked off the training grounds, leaving Trafalgar alone in the lingering silence. For a while, he just stood there, Maledicta still faintly pulsing in his hand. Then he sighed, dismissing the weapon in a ripple of shadow.

He reached for his discarded shirt, wiping the sweat from his chest before pulling it over his head. His body ached from the spar, but his mind was heavier still.

'What a cruel class. Useful, sure. But to carry the Echo of someone you lost, again and again... he's right—it's twisted. This whole world feels the same. Cruel by design.'

As he walked back toward the dormitory buildings, another thought gnawed at him, softer, more personal. 'I hope Mayla wakes up soon. I can't leave her behind again. Not in that place, surrounded by lunatics. This time I'll bring her with me. I can rent a place for her here, or maybe she can stay with Marella and Arden. One way or another... I'll keep her safe. It's what I should have done from the beginning, I guess some feelings from Trafalgar remain with my current self.'

The resolution settled in his chest like steel. He wouldn't let tragedy repeat itself.

By the time he reached the tall dorm building, the sky had shifted into brighter hues. He quickened his pace, ready for a shower before classes began.

On his way back to the dormitory, Trafalgar spotted a familiar figure leaning casually against the walkway railing. Purple hair shimmered in the morning light, curling around a pair of curved black horns. Her gray eyes locked onto him the moment he approached.

"Good morning, Trafalgar," Zafira said with a faint smile. "Did you go train this early?"

"Yeah," he answered simply. "Couldn't sleep, so I decided to get some practice in before class."

"I see," she replied, falling in step beside him. "Shall we walk to class together?"

"Give me a moment to shower and change first," Trafalgar said.

"Of course. I'll accompany you."

The two of them entered the dormitory, heading up to the wing reserved for heirs of the Eight Great Families. Their rooms were conveniently close—hers at the far end of the hall, his a few doors away.

When Trafalgar unlocked his door, he glanced at her. "Want to wait inside?"

"Yes," she said without hesitation. "It's better to sit than stand around."

She wandered in as though it were her own place, flopping onto his neatly made bed. Raising a brow, she teased, "This time you made your bed. Were you expecting me?"

"Maybe," Trafalgar admitted with a small shrug. "Though I still don't have anything to offer you. Haven't had the time to shop." He paused, then added, "Want to take a walk after classes? I need to see if I can find something useful."

Her eyes widened slightly. The last time she had invited him to shop, he'd turned her down. The fact that he remembered made her smile.

"Gladly," she said. "After today's lessons?"

"Closer to sunset," he replied from the bathroom as he changed. "I need to meet with a professor first."

"Don't make me wait," she warned playfully. "When you're ready, find me in my room—the last one on the left."

"Got it," Trafalgar said, adjusting his shirt. "Left corner. I'll come once I'm done."

Together, they left for class.