

Tyrant 178

Chapter 178: Titan Clash

"Found you."

The man standing ahead wasn't just a man. Barefoot in the snow, black hair hanging wild over his shoulders, horns curling from his skull, his presence screamed predator. A faint scar tore across his ribs, still red from a wound not long healed.

Trafalgar studied him, waiting for the pressure to crush his lungs, for the weight of his aura to choke him like Caelvyrn's had. But it didn't. Strong, yes—dangerous, no doubt—but not the suffocating terror of his father or that other dragon.

'So this is the one? Doesn't feel half as heavy as Caelvyrn... or Valtair, for that matter. Not as scary as I thought.'

Beside him, Valtair's voice came cold. "What do you mean by that?"

The dragon's violet eyes gleamed with amusement. He raised a finger, pointing straight at Trafalgar. "That boy. That's what I found. I smelled it in that city... followed the trail until I lost it. Didn't expect him to walk right back into my path. Saves me the trouble."

Before Trafalgar could speak, Valtair stepped in front of him, one arm pushing him back, sword arm raised. His voice snapped like a whip. "Stay behind me."

Trafalgar blinked, almost laughing. 'Oh? Playing father now? That's a first. Not that I was planning to throw myself at that thing anyway. But fine. Protect me, Valtair... while I copy every damn move you make. It'll hurt like hell, but power's not free. Never is.'

The Gluttony Dragon smiled wider, eyes flicking between them. The snow crunched under his bare feet as he stepped forward, unbothered by the cold.

The hunt had truly begun.

Valttair didn't lower his sword. The steel shimmered in his grip, brilliant even against the pale blanket of snow. The glow fit him—fit the Morgain name. Radiant, uncompromising.

Trafalgar's gaze lingered on it, remembering his grandfather's words: "You look more like him..." He'd dismissed it at the time, uninterested. But now, watching that blade burn against the night, the question returned, nagging. 'More like who exactly?'

The dragon pressed one hand against his ribs where the deep gash still bled faintly. Purple sparks crackled, mana swirling unnaturally around the wound. In seconds, the flesh knitted shut.

It was regeneration, but forced—unnatural. The kind of healing that came at a cost. He was burning through mana to patch himself up, and the fact that he hadn't done it earlier meant he'd been saving his strength. Natural recovery would've been cheaper. Using this kind of spell now marked the fight as critical.

The dragon stretched, rolling his shoulders with a grin. "Better. Can't fight on an empty stomach, can I?" His gaze snapped to Valttair, teeth flashing. "I wonder how a Morgain tastes. Never had the chance before. Though... I did get a bite of one of yours. Mordrek, wasn't it? He put up a fight. Tougher than I expected."

Valttair's jaw tightened, a vein throbbing at his temple. His aura spiked like a blade drawn across stone—but then, with a sharp exhale, it steadied.

Trafalgar felt a chill. 'He's furious, but he won't show it. That's what makes him terrifying. A professional. Efficient. Efficiency means perfection. And perfection... is something I need to steal.'

Snow swirled between them as the distance closed.

Valttair raised his sword higher, the brilliance intensifying until it looked like a second sun in the frozen dark.

And Trafalgar's vision blurred with pain as Sword Insight roared to life.

The Gluttony Dragon tilted his head, eyes locked on Trafalgar. "I'll deal with you first," he said to Valtair, voice dripping with amusement. "Then I'll play with the boy. When you're gone, he won't last a heartbeat. But maybe he'll scream nicely. That'll be fun."

Trafalgar's lips tightened. 'Psychopath. If he turns on me, it's over. I'd have to dodge every strike like it's a Souls boss fight... and his attacks are faster. There's no timing in the world that'd save me.'

And then Valtair was gone, as he used [Morgain's Riftstep].

No blur. No warning. Just vanished.

The air behind the dragon exploded outward, snow whipping in all directions. A ripple of pressure cracked the ground where Valtair reappeared, sword already raised for a killing blow.

The sight stabbed through Trafalgar's mind like a spike of ice. His body staggered as a brutal headache crashed down, forcing him to one knee. Hot blood trickled from his nose. He had seen the movement—no, recorded it with his mind—but only barely.

His breathing came ragged, vision swimming. The technique had left a mark inside him, but incomplete, fractured, like a sketch burned into memory.

Understanding increased: 5%.

"Argh!" The sound tore from his throat before he could bite it back. His head throbbed, but he kept his eyes locked on the clash. Missing even a single moment wasn't an option.

This was swordsmanship at its peak. Perfection in motion.

And Trafalgar would grind that perfection into his bones, no matter how much it broke him.

Snow howled around them as Valttair struck. One moment he stood behind the dragon, the next his sword carved downward in a sweeping arc, the air itself tearing apart.

[Morgain's Final Crescent]

A crescent-shaped slash of pure energy roared forward, black fire lacing the cut as if it split flesh and mana alike. The valley trembled. The very sky seemed to flinch.

The Gluttony Dragon snarled, arm snapping up. Scales burst across his forearm, jagged and gleaming like obsidian shields. The blade met them with a thunderclap, sparks flying, the crescent burning into the scales before dissolving in a hiss of smoke.

Trafalgar's eyes went wide. His head screamed with pain, white-hot agony exploding behind his eyes as Sword Insight forced the image deeper into him. His stomach lurched. For a second, he thought he'd black out.

But he held on.

The shape of that strike—the weight, the rhythm, the way Valttair funneled everything into a single, merciless cut—it etched itself inside him. Not whole, not yet, but the foundation was there.

[Morgain's Final Crescent] – Understanding increased: 15%.

His chest heaved, lungs burning. His knuckles dug into the snow as he forced himself upright, blood trailing down from his nose, vision flickering in and out.

'I'm close... so damn close. One more look. One more perfect moment, and it'll be mine. Valttair's blade won't just belong to him anymore. I'll steal it. I'll master it. Even if it kills me.'

Lightning sparked in the dragon's palms, crawling up his arms in black-gold veins. His grin widened, sharp teeth bared.

Valttair steadied his sword again, glow unshaken.

And Trafalgar, shaking and bleeding, refused to blink.

The duel had only just begun.