

Tyrant 203

Chapter 203: "Your turn."

The warehouse burned with the color of dying embers. Cracks spread across the stone floor, and the air shimmered under the heat of Lucien's flames. Trafalgar stood in the center of it all—silent, still, Maledicta held loosely at his side. The faint hum of mana around him was steady and unhurried, his breathing calm despite the heat.

Lucien smirked from behind the [Brawler]. "What's wrong, Lord Morgain? Not feeling so confident now? Maybe that fancy family name doesn't mean much without your guards."

The [Brawler] cracked his gauntlets together, each sound echoing like a hammer against steel. "You really think you can take us both?"

Trafalgar didn't answer. His expression didn't even flicker. He took one measured step forward. The movement alone made Lucien flinch.

"Trying to look intimidating now, huh?" Lucien sneered, conjuring a ball of fire in his hand. "I wonder what your family will say when you die here like a dog."

The firelight flickered across Trafalgar's face. His eyes shifted, sharp and calm, meeting Lucien's.

"You talk too much," he said quietly. "Don't you ever get tired?"

The [Brawler] growled, stomping the ground as he activated [Iron Rush]. The floor cracked beneath his weight as he charged, each step shaking the debris around them.

Trafalgar's stance changed in a heartbeat. Maledicta tilted slightly forward, his center of gravity lowering—precise, ready.

The moment the [Brawler] swung, Trafalgar stepped aside. The massive fist missed by inches, slicing through smoke. He countered instantly—[Arc Slash]—a crescent of dark-blue energy exploding from his blade. It struck the Brawler's shoulder, tearing through his armor with a burst of sparks.

Lucien raised his staff and shouted, [Fireburst Orb]. The sphere detonated where Trafalgar had been standing, filling the air with fire and ash.

When the smoke cleared, Trafalgar was already gone from sight.

The Brawler charged again, boots cracking against the stone floor. Each step sent shockwaves through the scorched ground, and the heat of Lucien's lingering flames made the air waver between them.

Trafalgar shifted his footing, weight centered, Maledicta held low. The moment the gauntlet swung, he moved—clean, minimal motion. Steel met steel with a deafening CLANG, the impact throwing sparks across the room.

The Brawler grinned, forcing his weight forward, the sheer pressure driving Trafalgar back a step. "Come on, noble boy! Hit harder!"

The response came wordlessly. Trafalgar slid to the side, twisting his wrist. Maledicta's edge caught a sliver of the man's exposed shoulder. Blood sprayed, a thin red arc lost in the haze.

Lucien lifted his staff. [Scorch Field] burst to life, flames spreading across the ground in a burning circle. The light painted everything in orange and red.

The Brawler ignored the heat, his body already glowing faintly with mana reinforcement. He slammed both fists down—[Breaker Punch]!—the blow releasing a concussive blast that shredded the smoke. The wave hit Trafalgar full on, throwing him backward across the floor.

He rolled once, stopping in a crouch. The heat clawed at his skin, but his breathing stayed even. The mana inside him flowed faster, the passive rhythm of Primordial Body feeding his strength, restoring what he spent.

The Brawler came again—another rush, wild and powerful. Trafalgar lowered his stance, the tip of Maledicta dragging sparks as it scraped the floor.

At the last second, he stepped aside and countered. [Severing Fang]!

The air split diagonally with a sharp THRMM, the pressure wave cutting a clean gouge through the Brawler's armguard and across his ribs. The man staggered, pain flashing across his face.

Lucien shouted, launching a [Fireburst Orb], the explosion washing them both in light and smoke.

When the flames cleared, Trafalgar was already moving forward again—silent, precise, relentless.

Lucien's flames rolled across the floor in waves, painting the air in gold and red. Smoke and heat wrapped around Trafalgar like a curtain, but he didn't stop. He walked straight through it, each step measured, eyes fixed on the Brawler standing between him and the mage.

The man's skin still shimmered with [Stonehide], gray and cracked like rock, steam rising from his shoulders. "You're still standing?" he grunted, mana swelling in his fists. "Then let's end this!"

Trafalgar exhaled quietly and brought Maledicta to his side. Black mana gathered along the blade, twisting into streaks of shadow that pulsed in rhythm with his heartbeat. The floor beneath him cracked slightly as the pressure built.

[Morgain's Requiem].

The first slash came in a wide arc, a black wave slicing the air. It tore through the smoke and struck the Brawler's side, carving a shallow cut that burned instead of bled.

Slash.

A second cut followed, lower and faster, tracing a curved shadow along the ground. The force ripped through a nearby crate, sending splinters spinning.

Slash!

The third wave came upward, the mana laced with the faint whistle of tearing air. The blade's trail left a glowing crescent of darkness that grazed the Brawler's chest, scattering droplets of red.

Slash—!

The fourth cut reversed direction, spinning horizontally. The pressure around Trafalgar burst outward in a violent gust, knocking aside debris and slashing through the flames that surrounded him.

Lucien shielded his face, shouting over the roar. "He's cutting through the fire—what the hell is that!?"

Slash!

The final strike descended like a guillotine. A black arc expanded outward, doubling in range, slicing through the air with a deep, resonant THRMM! The Brawler's footing broke, and he dropped to one knee, blood dripping through cracks in his hardened skin. Trails of black energy shimmered around him, the faint burn of Maledicta's mana still eating into the wounds.

Trafalgar's figure blurred again—[Severance Step].

He vanished from Lucien's sight, the sound of his boots replaced by a rush of air. A moment later, he reappeared beneath the Brawler's guard, sliding between his legs in one smooth motion.

The giant swung down, but hit nothing. Trafalgar was already behind him, one knee pressing into the man's back as he climbed up in a burst of momentum. The Brawler roared in frustration, twisting, but Trafalgar moved faster—balanced perfectly on his shoulders, Maledicta gleaming in the flickering firelight.

The Brawler tried to shake him off, fists pounding at his sides, but Trafalgar's focus didn't waver. His breathing stayed steady, mana flowing through him like a quiet rhythm.

The next strike would end it.

The Brawler struggled beneath him, muscles bulging, every motion shaking the scorched floor. Trafalgar stayed balanced on his back, calm amid the chaos. The man roared, slamming his fists against the ground, but Trafalgar didn't flinch.

His left hand shifted slightly. In a flash of dark light, a dagger materialized in his grip—Widow's Whisper, its curved edge gleaming faintly in the firelight. The weapon felt light, perfectly familiar, as if it had always been there.

Without a word, Trafalgar drove it down.

SHHK!

The blade pierced straight through the Brawler's temple. The hidden spring mechanism clicked open inside, driving a second edge deeper into bone. The sound that followed was short—a low gasp, then silence.

The man's body froze, every muscle locking before gravity pulled him forward. He fell face-first with a heavy THUD, the impact shaking the ground and scattering fragments of stone.

Trafalgar stayed still for a moment, standing atop the fallen body. The firelight danced across the floor, painting his shadow long and thin. Slowly, he pulled the dagger free, blood trailing in the air before vanishing as he desummoned it.

Muffled crackling from Lucien's remaining flames echoed through the hall.

Lucien stood several meters away, his staff trembling, sweat beading at his temple. His eyes darted from the corpse to Trafalgar—no words, no confidence left.

Trafalgar stepped down from the body, boots crunching against ash and glass. He raised Maledicta, its edge humming low with faint black mana.

His gaze locked on Lucien. His voice was quiet, steady—almost indifferent.

"Your turn."