

Tyrant 217

Chapter 217: The Warlord's Gift

The sun had climbed higher, flooding the training field with pale golden light. One by one, students began to arrive — elves, humans, beastkin — all dressed in different shades of the academy's uniform, each holding a weapon that reflected their path.

Trafalgar stood near the edge of the field, Maledicta resting lazily over his shoulder. His gaze swept across the gathering crowd. Most faces were unfamiliar — first-years of which none of them worth remembering.

The atmosphere shifted when Eryndor stepped forward. His presence alone silenced the whispers. The Warlord's broad frame cast a long shadow across the ground, his greatsword resting casually on one shoulder as if it weighed nothing.

"Alright, listen up!" His deep voice boomed through the field. "The best way to learn swordsmanship..." He smirked, swinging the blade down until its tip buried itself in the ground with a heavy thud. "...is through experience."

A wave of energy rippled outward from the impact, stirring the dust.

"Today," Eryndor continued, "we're doing one-on-one duels. No magic tricks, no fancy spells like the ones Kaelen can use, true warriors face each other hand to hand — just your sword and your guts."

Murmurs spread among the students — a mix of excitement and fear. Trafalgar simply crossed his arms, unimpressed.

Then Eryndor's golden eyes landed on him. A grin spread across his face. "And since we've got a returning student today..." He raised a hand, pointing straight at Trafalgar. "Let's make it interesting."

A pause.

The Warlord's grin widened. "Trafalgar du Morgain — welcome back. You're fighting me."

The entire field went silent.

Trafalgar blinked once. "You call that a welcome?"

Eryndor laughed — a low, thunderous sound. "You'll find out soon enough, boy."

The students backed away, forming a wide circle around the field. The hum of the mana barrier grew denser, enclosing both fighters in a faint blue dome. Dust drifted lazily between them as Eryndor planted his boots into the ground, his grin wide and wolfish.

"Don't hold back, Morgain," he said, resting his greatsword on one shoulder. "I don't do warm-ups."

Trafalgar spun Maledicta once in his hand, its black edge humming faintly with mana. "Wouldn't dream of it."

Eryndor moved first.

A step — and then he vanished. The next instant, a deafening crack split the ground where he'd stood. His greatsword came down like thunder.

Trafalgar barely managed to meet it with [Arc Slash], the two blades colliding in a storm of sparks and raw force. The impact shot through his arms and spine, his feet carving deep furrows in the sand.

Eryndor laughed. "Good! But you're still too stiff!"

He twisted his stance and unleashed another blow, heavier and faster. The air rippled around it — the movement so clean it seemed impossible for human eyes to follow.

That's when Sword Insight flared.

The world slowed. Lines of force, balance, and rhythm carved themselves across Eryndor's motion, flooding Trafalgar's mind. His skull throbbed as the understanding forced its way in — structure, intent, weight, flow — every detail burning itself into his nerves.

It was agony.

And yet, through the pain... Trafalgar smiled.

'It hurts like hell... but I'm learning. Every second of this fight makes me stronger.'

Eryndor caught the expression mid-swing. "Why the hell are you smiling, boy?"

Trafalgar's eyes gleamed beneath the sweat and blood. "Because this—" he lunged forward with [Severance Step], his blade cutting through the air, "—is exactly what I needed."

Their weapons collided again, [Severing Fang] bursting from Maledicta in a dark diagonal flare that met the greatsword head-on. The shockwave cracked the barrier and sent a gust rolling across the field.

Eryndor laughed like thunder. "You're insane, Morgain—hah! I like it!"

And through the roar of clashing steel, Trafalgar kept smiling.

The sand shuddered under every clash. Waves of mana rippled through the air, scattering dust and light across the barrier.

Eryndor's greatsword came down again, the impact carving a crater into the ground. Trafalgar darted aside at the last moment with [Severance Step], air hissing around him as he reappeared behind the Warlord and countered with a quick [Arc Slash].

The attack connected, sending a spray of sparks off Eryndor's armor — barely a scratch. The man didn't even flinch.

'He's holding back,' Trafalgar realized, breathing hard. 'By a lot.'

Eryndor turned, grinning. "Good reflexes, but you're thinking too small!"

He stomped once. Mana burst outward from his legs, and his body twisted in a brutal pivot — a stance rooted deep in the earth. Trafalgar's eyes widened.

Sword Insight activated again.

Every shift of weight, every rotation of muscle, every flick of the wrist — it all etched itself into Trafalgar's mind at once. His skull felt like it was splitting open. He could feel his consciousness vibrating under the overload of information.

But he refused to look away.

'Don't blink. Don't lose it. Remember every detail.'

Eryndor's blade tore through the ground in a devastating motion — the earth itself splitting as mana surged along its edge. A wave of force exploded outward, flattening everything in front of him.

Trafalgar threw himself sideways, narrowly avoiding the blast. His ears rang; his vision blurred. Blood dripped steadily from his nose now.

Still, he smiled.

He dropped into a low stance, mirroring the way Eryndor's foot had pivoted — the angle of his shoulders, the timing of his breath.

Pain burned behind his eyes, but his focus sharpened. 'I can use it... simplify it... cut everything else out.'

Eryndor's laugh boomed across the field. "You're still copying me while bleeding all over the sand? Hah! You really are a Morgain!"

Trafalgar tightened his grip on Maledicta.

He lunged forward, black mana surging around him like smoke. The next swing wasn't perfect — but it was close. The sand erupted beneath his feet as his strike carved through the air in a faint echo of Eryndor's own.

The arena had fallen silent. Dust hung in the air like smoke, the scent of mana thick and heavy. Eryndor stood tall, greatsword in hand, his aura pressing outward like a storm about to break. Trafalgar's body screamed in pain—his temples throbbing, blood dripping down his nose—but his eyes remained sharp.

He adjusted his stance, feet steady, breath aligned. The Warlord grinned.

Trafalgar answered with motion. Black mana burst from his core as Maledicta flared to life, its edge rippling like liquid darkness.

[Morgain's Requiem]

The world exploded into motion. Trafalgar's slashes spun in a fluid circle, shadow arcs slicing through the air, cutting through sand and dust alike. The storm of black energy surged outward, shaking the barrier's edges.

Eryndor advanced through it unharmed, each step cracking the ground, his greatsword moving like a falling hammer. Trafalgar didn't hesitate — he condensed all his remaining mana into one final strike.

[Morgain's Final Crescent]

The inverted arc of darkness erupted from Maledicta, the swing tearing through space with violent precision. Black fire burned behind it, searing the very air.

Eryndor's stance shifted—low, balanced, perfect. His mana condensed at his feet, rising through his arms in a blinding surge.

[Earthsplitter]

The collision detonated. Dust and sand exploded outward, a shockwave rippling through the barrier and into the stands. The noise drowned everything.

When it faded, Trafalgar was kneeling, gripping Maledicta to stay upright. His breathing was ragged, but his gaze never left the crater in front of him.

[You have learned: Earthsplitter (Lv.1) – Epic Rank]

A two-stage cleave that channels mass and mana into a downward strike, fracturing the ground and generating a stunning shockwave. High stagger potential against heavy or fortified targets.

Eryndor's grin widened, voice rough and approving. "Not bad, boy. You've got power, but you're still green. You've got a long way to go before you can call yourself a true Morgain."

He let out a long breath, sweat and blood dripping down his face. 'He has no idea that I copied it... perfectly.'