

Tyrant 31

Chapter 31: Beneath Noble Feet

The ride was long, but smooth. The cobbled road snaked gently through the terrain, carefully maintained, though rarely traveled. Snow no longer dusted the landscape; they had left the Morgain mountains behind.

Inside the carriage, silence reigned.

Lysandra sat on the left, quietly gazing out the window with an arm propped under her chin. Malakar, ever imposing, sat across from her—his crimson eyes locked onto Trafalgar with a heavy, almost predatory stare.

Trafalgar tried not to make eye contact. His spine stiffened every time he felt that gaze. Fortunately, Zafira was asleep beside him, her head resting softly on his shoulder, breathing slow and steady. Her long, purple hair brushed against his arm with each bump in the road.

He didn't dare move. Not because he was frozen in fear—but because waking her would make everything more awkward.

'Why the hell is he looking at me like that?' he thought, keeping his gaze on the floor. 'I've literally done nothing wrong, his daughter is just using my shoulder as a pillow.'

Out the window, a low mountain appeared in the distance. Near its base, Trafalgar spotted dozens of demons already at work, hammering away with pickaxes. A squad of ten armored demonkin stood nearby—soldiers, judging by their matching black-plated gear and long polearms.

Closer to the path, another ten men—humans this time—wore the sigil of Morgain on their cloaks. Morgain soldiers. They stood still, watching the approaching carriage.

Trafalgar's thoughts stirred.

'Why so many guards...? Do we actually need that kind of manpower just to walk into a mine? What kind of monsters are living in there?'

He leaned forward a little.

"Are there monsters inside the mine?" he asked, directing the question to no one in particular.

Lysandra responded without looking away from the window. "Just a few, nothing major. They are Pulse-rank, mostly."

Trafalgar raised a brow.

'Pulse? That's one rank above Spark... and I just hit Spark myself. Still far, it is only a rank but I learned that one rank it's too much of a difference in this world, can boost you like 50%.'

He thought the word. Status.

A blue window appeared in front of his eyes. He blinked, shifting to the [Inventory] tab. Two items were listed.

[Items]

- Maledicta – Type: Evolutive Weapon – Rank: Uncommon

- Oathbinder – Accessory – Rank: Legendary

His eyes sparkled.

'Uncommon. It really evolved with me...'

His grip tightened slightly. A mix of pride and excitement stirred inside his chest—until Malakar's voice cut through.

"Is something the matter, young Trafalgar?"

Trafalgar blinked the window away.

"Nothing, Lord Malakar. I was just thinking... it's my first time leaving Morgain territory in a while. That's all."

Malakar's lips curled ever so slightly.

"I see. Strange. I recall rumors of the Morgain bastard child—useless, locked in his room. But you seem different now."

Trafalgar met his eyes, unflinching. "I hope your opinion of me continues to improve, then."

A beat of silence.

Then the butler's voice rang from outside: "We've arrived."

Zafira was still sound asleep. Trafalgar shifted gently, nudging her shoulder just enough to wake her.

"Mmm...? Are we here?" she murmured, her eyes half-lidded.

Trafalgar nodded. "Yeah. We're at the mine."

He didn't say it aloud, but something about this place... didn't feel good.

As the carriage doors opened, a gust of warm, mineral-heavy air greeted them. The mine loomed ahead—carved into the side of the mountain, reinforced with steel arches and engraved stone.

A group of demons stood in formation near the entrance, weapons sheathed, their posture disciplined. They wore dark crimson armor, the crest of Zar'khael embossed over the chestplates. Behind them, Morgain soldiers lingered in loose formation, watching the arrival with subtle wariness.

The demon guards bowed in unison.

"Welcome, Lord Malakar. Lady Zafira. We're glad you've arrived safely."

Malakar stepped forward, his expression stern. "These are our guests. They deserve proper acknowledgment."

He gestured casually toward Lysandra. "You already know her. And this is Trafalgar. I'm sure you've heard the rumors."

The demon guards shifted slightly, bowing again—this time to both Morgains.

Trafalgar tilted his head, surprised.

'Oh? So this is what respect feels like... Not bad. I could get used to this.'

But the feeling was short-lived.

The Morgain soldiers remained stiff. Some even avoided looking at him.

They bowed to Lysandra. Then to Malakar. Then to Zafira.

But not to him.

Trafalgar narrowed his eyes. He stepped forward, hands behind his back.

"I see you've forgotten something," he said, voice cold. "I'll make sure Lord Valtair hears how his men refused to acknowledge a Morgain heir."

The soldiers froze. A heartbeat later, they snapped to attention, saluting with trained synchrony.

"We offer our respects to Young Master Trafalgar du Morgain!"

Lysandra raised an eyebrow, visibly holding back a smirk. Zafira yawned and rubbed her eyes.

Malakar didn't react.

"Good," he said simply.

"Now, open the gates. Let's proceed." Malakar ordered.

A pair of demons moved swiftly to turn the massive crank that unlocked the mine entrance. With a groan of metal and magic, the heavy stone-and-iron doors slid open, revealing a cavernous passageway lit by faintly glowing crystals.

Some of the soldiers made appear torches, inside was a little bit dark.

Lysandra took the lead.

"Follow me. Morgain soldiers, behind me. Trafalgar, you too."

He stepped into the mine, the light casting a bluish hue over his face. Crystals pulsed from the walls—azure, violet, and deep indigo. The air inside was thick with mana.

'So this is what a mana-rich vein looks like... Damn. These aren't small deposits. They're massive.'

Malakar hung back, giving orders to his own men to begin work in the cleared zones.

The deeper they went, the more intense the glow became. The crystals seemed to hum—almost alive. Trafalgar kept close behind his sister.

They moved deeper.

The air grew heavier. The glow of the mana crystals intensified, and their size became absurd—some as tall as a grown man, jutting from the walls like fangs of light. Colors swirled inside them: shades of blue, violet, and silver.

Trafalgar couldn't look away.

'How much are these even worth? Pretty sure this could cover gas prices back on Earth. For a week, at least... or rent in New York for a while.'

His thoughts were cut short.

A screech echoed from deeper within the tunnel.

Then another.

A chorus of guttural shrieks answered back.

From a split in the cavern wall, three monsters lunged out—twisted, sinewy beasts with pale green hides, long limbs, and multiple crimson eyes. Their claws dragged against the stone, leaving jagged gouges in their path.

Their teeth were serrated, like a saw.

"Contact—monsters!" one of the Morgain soldiers shouted.

Lysandra didn't flinch.

She stepped forward calmly and extended her arm. A white light burst , and in a flash, her sword appeared—an elegant longsword, platinum-white with a faint golden edge.

With no battle cry, she launched herself forward.

The first creature didn't even have time to snarl.

Lysandra slid beneath its claw, spun, and severed its leg in one clean cut. The monster collapsed with a shriek—then went silent as her blade pierced its neck with surgical precision.

The second lunged.

She side-stepped it, dragging her sword along its chest in one fluid motion—opening it from shoulder to hip.

Blood splattered across the cave floor.

The third tried to run.

Lysandra flicked her wrist and hurled her sword like a javelin. The weapon spun once and embedded itself cleanly between its eyes.

All three bodies dropped before the soldiers could react.

Trafalgar stared, stunned.

'She's on a different level...'

Her form had been flawless—measured, ruthless, like a dancer weaving through death. Not a drop of her own blood spilled.

Zafira clapped softly behind him. "Elegant, as always."

Lysandra retrieved her sword with a casual motion. "That's it for now. Just strays. Let's keep moving."

Trafalgar followed in silence, the image of her movements burned into his mind, and with it a headache because of his passive skill.

The heart of the mine opened up like a cathedral—massive, circular, with crystal pillars rising from the ground and ceiling. Dozens of veins of glowing mana pulsed around them like arteries in a living thing.

Twenty soldiers stood in formation, Lysandra at the front. Zafira and Malakar followed, calm. Trafalgar walked just behind.

Lysandra gestured around. "As you can see, this is the core zone. My father was right—this place is worth far more than ten legendary items."

Malakar nodded with a hum. "Tell your father I'll remember that. Despite how annoying he was to negotiate with..."

He turned to one of his armored men. "Begin extraction preparations. The deeper we go, the more advantage we gain."

The demon soldier bowed. "Understood, my lord."

Then—

Thud.

A dull, meaty sound. Something bounced against the stone with wet weight.

Everyone turned.

It was a head. A Morgain soldier's severed head—eyes still wide with terror—rolled to a stop beside Malakar's feet.

Malakar glanced down. His expression remained untouched.

His voice was calm. Almost bored.

"Hmph. Weak."

Gasps echoed behind him, but he didn't look back.

A crystalline cracking sound shattered the moment.

KRSHHH.

A rift tore itself into the chamber wall like paper splitting under fire.

Darkness bled out from the jagged crack—and from it crawled monsters.

Twisted Void Creatures emerged—grotesque hybrids of beast and man, hunched and twitching, skin slick like oil, limbs contorted in unnatural angles. Some walked like feral dogs, others dragged misshapen arms behind them. All had no eyes—just smooth faces stretched into silent, snarling mockeries of life.

They moved with jerky precision.

Like puppets straining at invisible strings.

Trafalgar's body locked in place.

'What... what the fuck are those...?'

Cold sweat ran down his spine.

Every primal instinct screamed run, but his feet refused.

Lysandra didn't hesitate. Her sword shimmered into existence again, light reflecting off its platinum edge.

A second rift snapped open—this time below them.

The ground collapsed.

Crystals shattered. Stone gave way.

"—Trafalgar!" Lysandra's voice echoed.

Too late.

Trafalgar's footing vanished. He plummeted, and so did three others—two Morgain soldiers and one demon soldier, their screams sharp and rising as they disappeared into the abyss with him.

The fall wasn't instant. It was long. Too long for his liking.

Wind howled past his ears. The darkness was so complete it blurred the line between sky and stone.

Trafalgar's heart pounded in his chest like it was trying to escape.

'No, no—what the hell is this?!

He twisted midair, trying to orient himself.

Above him, the rift pulsed like a malignant wound.

Beside him, one of the soldiers slammed into a jagged outcrop—bones cracking audibly—before tumbling lifeless into the void.

"SHIT—!"

His fingers clawed at the walls of the tunnel—dirt, crystal, blood-slicked edges—but nothing held.

His body ricocheted off a protruding ledge. Pain exploded in his ribs.

He screamed.

'It hurts—it actually fucking hurts—! I'm going to die like this? Like this?!

His survival instincts kicked in, and he Maledicta.

The sword materialized in his grip with a faint glow, and he slammed it into the rock wall.

CLANG—!

Sparks flared. The blade caught—but only for a moment. His arm jolted from the force, and the sword ripped loose again.

He fell further. Another ledge. He hit it sideways—something in his shoulder wrenched out of place.

"GH—!" He bit down on the pain.

Again, he struck. Again, it failed.

The air grew colder.

The second soldier—screaming—vanished into the black below, his voice fading with a final crunch.

The last soldier didn't even scream. His body flailed, limp.

Trafalgar was next.

His arms were shaking. Vision blurring. One more try—

He raised Maledicta.

And then—

[Bloodline has awakened successfully.]

The system's message rang clear in his skull. Calm. Detached. Indifferent to his terror.

Before he could process it—

THUMP.

He hit something solid. Bone-jarring. Hard.

The world shattered around him.