

Tyrant 37

Chapter 37: Surprise

The warm glow of the Blazewick Torch vanished from Trafalgar's hand as he sent it back into his inventory. He needed both hands free to climb the jagged stone wall rising before him.

'This should be easier. I've got the Primordial Body now, and I'm Spark rank... this shouldn't be a struggle.'

But reality was far less forgiving. Even with his enhanced physique, the slick surfaces and steep incline made every foothold treacherous. Thankfully, his vision had improved slightly since his advancement, allowing him to spot natural crevices and ledges more clearly.

He pulled himself upward, fingers gripping tightly against the cold stone. To keep his mind focused, he started singing something dumb—an improvised chant that helped him set a rhythm.

"One, two, I won't slip through...

Three, four, screw the floor...

Five, six, don't break my wrist..."

It was ridiculous, but it worked. He'd repeated the chant twenty times already—at least, that's how he kept track of the time. Around the twentieth loop, fatigue began to settle in. His fingers burned, and his breath came shorter.

'Why the hell am I this tired already? I guess my body still isn't trained enough.'

Suddenly, his right hand slipped against a mossy patch.

Without hesitation, he summoned Maledicta. The blade appeared instantly, and he drove it into the rock wall with a sharp grunt. The steel bit into the stone, holding firm.

He used it to pull himself up slightly, planting both feet on a narrow ledge jutting from the wall.

Trafalgar leaned into the stone and exhaled, chest heaving.

'Please tell me there's a way out up there...'

For the next five minutes, he stood there, letting his arms rest. The blade remained lodged beside him as he gathered his strength.

Then, without a word, he dispelled Maledicta and continued the climb—twenty more minutes of silent struggle through the darkness, inching closer to whatever awaited above.

At last, he reached the top.

Trafalgar pulled himself over the edge and collapsed onto the stone floor, arms trembling, legs numb. He didn't bother checking his surroundings for monsters—his mind was too fogged with exhaustion.

'If something's here... it can kill me after I catch my breath.'

He closed his eyes and let the silence wash over him. His chest rose and fell slowly as he took in the damp, earthy scent of the cavern.

But when he opened his eyes, something was next to his face.

A veil.

Black and delicate, hanging just inches from his cheek.

His eyes widened instantly. He rolled away, springing to his feet and summoning Maledicta again with a flash of mana. The blade pulsed darkly in his hand as he raised it defensively.

There she was.

The veiled woman.

The same figure who had paralyzed him days ago... the one who'd forced that burning pill down his throat.

She stood calmly, face hidden beneath layers of black lace, her body wrapped in a flowing black dress that seemed to absorb the dim light around them.

"You don't need the sword," she said softly. Her voice was calm, almost melodic. "I'm not here to hurt you."

Trafalgar's grip tightened.

"You already did hurt me. You forced that pill down my throat. I thought I was dying."

"I didn't try to kill you," she replied. "Quite the opposite, actually. I saved you."

"Saved me?" He scoffed. "Burning alive from the inside? That's your idea of saving someone?"

"Believe what you want. But that pill is the reason you're still alive."

His eyes narrowed. "Why? How would it save me?"

She tilted her head slightly. "From the Void Creatures."

Trafalgar's heart skipped.

"You mean... those things from the Rift? The ones that look half-human, no faces?"

"The same."

"And how exactly did your pill help with that?"

She stepped forward once, slowly.

"Those creatures are drawn to specific kinds of energy. To bloodlines. Talents. To anything that shouldn't exist in this world or it's abnormal. That pill did two things. First—it erased your presence from their perception. You're invisible to them now. At least... for a while."

Trafalgar didn't lower the sword. "And the second?"

"It helped you reach your next phase. Spark, wasn't it?" she said, almost playfully.

"You're saying the pain was... good for me."

"Exactly."

His expression hardened. "Why are you helping me?"

"Because of your bloodline."

He blinked. "What does that even mean? Why does it matter so much that even monsters from another world or dimension or I don't know where from, want me dead? Why you?"

She turned her head slightly, but didn't answer immediately.

"...You're still too weak to know everything. You'll probably understand when you do a little research, I can only tell you that your future is prewritten."

A sudden shift in the air made Trafalgar glance around.

The stone beneath his feet pulsed faintly—wrong, unstable.

Tiny cracks of glowing cyan and violet light began to stretch across the cavern walls like spiderwebs. Silent at first. Then came the hum. A deep, unnatural vibration that set his teeth on edge.

Rifts.

Everywhere.

Small tears in space flickered into existence—dozens of them, all at once, surrounding them from every side. Their dark centers churned with a swirling void.

The veiled woman turned her head toward them, unfazed.

"It seems they've found me," she murmured. "Time's up."

Trafalgar instinctively took a step back, his grip tightening around Maledicta.

"You said I was hidden."

"You are," she replied. "I'm not."

She lifted her hand and snapped her fingers once. A faint ripple spread through the air around her, but the rifts remained, growing wider with each passing second.

"I'm sending you out of here," she said calmly. "You've been trapped long enough."

"Trapped?" Trafalgar blinked. "It hasn't even been a full day."

She chuckled quietly beneath the veil.

"Three days, actually. You've been unconscious that long. Even Valtair noticed your absence."

His heart thudded once, hard.

"I'll see you again later? I need answers."

She looked at him then, not answering. A quiet pause passed between them.

And then they came.

Figures began to emerge from the rifts—inhuman, faceless shapes crawling from the void. Their limbs were distorted, elongated. Their movements twisted. Just like the ones from the Rift during the war—only now, they were far too close.

Trafalgar raised Maledicta.

She didn't flinch.

"It's still too early," she whispered, half to herself. "You'll understand eventually."

She turned her back on him.

"Until then... stay alive, Cursed Heir."

He opened his mouth to speak—but in the blink of an eye, everything shattered.

His vision fractured into white.

Trafalgar blinked.

The blinding white faded in a heartbeat, replaced by the dull orange glow of crystal-lit tunnels and the familiar, claustrophobic heat of the mine.

He was back.

Not just anywhere—but right at the heart of the mine, standing near the edge of the massive hole he'd fallen through days ago.

'What... the hell was that? What does it mean that my future is predetermined? Does it have to do with all the bad things that happen to me?'

His legs trembled slightly, still aching from the climb. His mind raced to make sense of it all—the woman, the Void Creatures, the sudden teleportation. It felt like a dream, yet his muscles ached, and Maledicta was still clutched in his hand.

Footsteps echoed from nearby.

A miner in worn armor bearing the Zar'khael crest turned the corner, holding a lantern infused with mana. He squinted through the dimness—and froze.

"Hey! Kid! You alright? You can't be down in this zone, it's restricted!"

Trafalgar didn't answer right away. He was still catching his breath, mind spinning. But as the man got a closer look, his expression shifted from irritation to confusion... then to recognition.

His eyes widened.

"Wait a second... you're—" The miner's jaw dropped. "You're him. You came with Lady Lysandra."

Trafalgar gave a faint nod, still dazed.

The miner spun around and shouted at the top of his lungs, voice echoing through the tunnel system.

"GET HELP! TRAFALGAR DU MORGAIN JUST CAME OUT ALIVE!!"