

Tyrant 50

Chapter 50: The Last Bowl

Dren manifested his sword with a sharp metallic hiss. The blade shimmered faintly—runes etched along its edge flickered with mana as he pointed it directly at Trafalgar.

"Enough talk."

Trafalgar didn't flinch. He extended his hand, and Maledicta materialized from thin air—her shape condensing into his grip like a living shadow.

They stared at each other.

The fire crackled between them.

Dren lunged first.

A sudden step forward, fast despite his state—his sword arcing down in a diagonal slash aimed at Trafalgar's shoulder.

Trafalgar parried with Maledicta, the impact jarring his wrist. He slid back on the snow-packed ground, boots grinding against the dirt.

'Strong... even weakened.'

Dren came again, this time with a thrust to the ribs.

Trafalgar twisted, narrowly dodging, the tip of the blade grazing his shirt. He pivoted to the left and backed toward the firepit.

"You're running?" Dren spat, circling him.

"I'm thinking," Trafalgar replied, eyes scanning the area. 'Gotta buy time... he'll slow down if the poison does its job.'

He shifted the ladle still lying near the fire with a quick kick, letting the wooden handle catch flame before he scooped it up and flung it at Dren.

The burning ladle spun toward him like a clumsy dart. Dren knocked it aside with a grunt, but the embers burst across his chest and shoulders, drawing a wince.

Trafalgar didn't wait.

He closed the distance during the opening, slashing upward at Dren's chest. Dren blocked again, but this time Trafalgar felt it—his timing, the arc of the swing, the subtle bend in Dren's elbow.

'Sword Insight, not good when I'm fighting for my life.'

Another clash—metal screaming against metal. Sparks flew.

Trafalgar stepped back, breathing heavier.

Dren chuckled, raising his sword again. "You've got guts, I'll give you that. But guts won't stop steel."

Trafalgar wiped a drop of blood from the corner of his mouth.

"No. But they might buy me five more minutes."

The clash continued, blades ringing like war bells in the snowy silence.

Trafalgar moved with fluid grace—Morgain Blade activated naturally through habit, each step precise, each swing clean and elegant. He flowed rather than fought, deflecting Dren's strikes just enough to survive the next second.

But Dren was no amateur.

He feinted a high slash and twisted low, his blade nearly severing Trafalgar's ankle. The boy leapt back, his boot skimming snow and ash.

'He's good—no, trained. That movement just now—'

The moment he registered it, a pulse of mana surged through Trafalgar's skull.

Crack.

His vision blurred. A spike of pain shot behind his right eye, searing down his jaw like lightning.

He staggered.

His mind was being overwritten—Sword Insight was forcefully absorbing Dren's technique: the angle of the wrist, the shifting of weight, the faint twitch of the shoulder before a feint.

'Fuck—here it comes again—'

Dren advanced, slicing from above.

Trafalgar felt the form now. His body recognized it. His left foot turned at the correct moment, Maledicta rose with a reversed grip—and he parried it almost perfectly.

But the second he did, the pain returned.

His knees buckled for half a second. Blood ran from his nose.

"You're slowing down," Dren growled, swinging again.

Trafalgar ducked under the blade and rolled away, boots crunching in slush. He reached down and scooped a handful of snow and dirt, flinging it straight into Dren's eyes.

The man roared, staggering back and wiping at his face.

Trafalgar lunged forward—one slash, then a follow-up thrust, the style now shifting slightly. His strikes were no longer just Morgain Blade—they had traces of Dren's own form.

Maledicta hummed.

The clash resumed, tighter now, closer. Dren's movements grew slightly more sluggish. His veins pulsed darker beneath his skin. The poison was working.

But Trafalgar wasn't unscathed—his temples pounded like war drums. His breaths came short. Sword Insight was rewriting more than just technique; it was rewriting instinct.

'Almost... just need to see it one more time...'

He blocked Dren's blade at the last possible second—metal grinding against metal in a scream—and gritted his teeth through the dizziness.

"I see it now," Trafalgar whispered.

Dren's brow furrowed. "What did you say?"

Dren's aura flared red as he planted his feet into the snow, gripping his sword with both hands. The air around him grew heavy, his breath visible in the freezing air like smoke from a furnace.

"You die here!" he roared, mana converging along his blade's edge.

He twisted his torso, dragged his foot across the ground, and launched forward in a violent, sweeping diagonal strike.

[Severing Fang]

The skill exploded outward with terrifying force—his sword cutting in a brutal arc designed to cleave straight through armor, bone, and will. The snow beneath the path of the blade melted instantly, steam rising in thick white clouds.

Trafalgar barely rolled aside, the edge missing him by inches as it carved into the earth. A ripple of pressure followed, throwing shards of ice into the air.

He coughed, staggered—and then froze.

His eyes locked onto Dren's footwork. The buildup. The release. Every detail etched into him like instinct.

[You learned Active Skill: Severing Fang. (Lv.1) - Rare Rank]

Trafalgar's fingers tightened around Maledicta.

Then he moved.

Same stance.

Same pressure.

A violent twist of his waist and a burst forward.

[Severing Fang]

His own slash burst forward in a mirrored arc, dark energy trailing behind it—colder, sharper, cleaner.

Dren barely managed to raise his blade in defense, but the blow crashed into him with full momentum. The impact forced him back, boots dragging through the snow, breath ripped from his lungs.

"What the hell—!?"

Trafalgar didn't answer.

He stood straight again, panting, blood on his lip, Maledicta humming softly.

He lifted the blade once more.

"Let's end this."

Dren gasped, staggered, barely holding his stance. Many minutes had passed and even though he was two ranks higher than Trafalgar, the poison was already too widespread throughout his body. His arms trembled, his blade cracked from the earlier impact. Blood streamed down his side where Trafalgar's mirrored strike had found purchase.

Trafalgar exhaled slowly, snow melting beneath his boots from the residual heat of his mana. Maledicta pulsed with faint blue light in his grip.

'Time to finish this.'

He surged forward—one foot carving through the slush.

[Arc Slash.

A sweeping horizontal cut exploded from Maledicta, trailing a ripple of dark-blue energy. It slammed into Dren's guard, throwing his blade to the side. The shockwave sent snow and ash scattering in all directions.

Dren stumbled—off balance.

And Trafalgar didn't stop.

He slid his foot around, planting his weight.

Black mana surged.

[Morgain's Requiem]

The world dimmed around him as his blade became an extension of his will. He moved like a phantom, dancing through snow and firelight. Five distinct slashes tore through the air—each one leaving behind a trailing arc of shadow mana that curved unnaturally.

One—sliced across Dren's left arm.

Two—carved deep into his hip.

Three—cut across his chest, rupturing leather and flesh.

Four—followed the second, deeper, causing blood to spray from his mouth.

Five—

The final slash howled through the cold air, doubling in range and speed.

It struck diagonally—upward from hip to neck, forcing Dren's body to twist violently.

He dropped to one knee, coughing blood, barely holding onto consciousness. His sword clattered to the ground, useless now.

"You—" he tried to speak.

Trafalgar stepped forward. His shadow flickered behind him. No hesitation.

"Too slow."

With a single clean motion, he raised Maledicta above his head—and brought it down.

Shhhk—

The blade passed clean through flesh and bone. Dren's head fell silently into the snow, eyes wide, mouth frozen mid-curse.

His body slumped seconds later.

Blood soaked the frost. Steam hissed into the air.

Trafalgar stood still, sword lowered, chest rising and falling with each breath. His clothes were torn, bloodied. A thin cut above his eyebrow trickled crimson down his cheek.

But he was alive.

He looked down at the severed head.

"Next time... bring more than five."

He turned toward the campfire without another word, Maledicta still dripping as the mountain wind howled.