

Tyrant 65

Chapter 65: Deeper Into the Forest

The forest stretched endlessly ahead, cloaked in a silent fog that only grew thicker as they advanced. Snow and mud mixed beneath their horses' hooves, each step sinking with a heavy, wet crunch.

Trafalgar glanced to his right. The captain easily over two meters tall was riding just ahead of him. The poor horse beneath him looked like it was doing everything in its power not to collapse. From behind, it almost looked like a grown ass man riding a pony.

Trafalgar clicked his tongue and trotted up beside him. "Wouldn't it have been better to stay grouped, Captain? What if that thing, whatever it is, is stronger than the tree my uncle just killed?"

The captain gave him a sideways glance, calm and collected. "No need to worry, my lord. If anything happens, we've got a flare ready. Our team has a mage, and the archer from the other group has signal shots prepared in case the other group needs help too. All we need to do is hold out until Lord Mordrek gets there."

He paused, then added with a shrug, "Besides, that tree... five of us could've handled it together. It was tough, but not that tough."

Trafalgar raised an eyebrow. "That's... surprisingly reassuring."

"Try to relax. You're not alone."

Trafalgar looked ahead. "What exactly are we looking for?"

"We're not sure either. Something's pushing the other monsters out. This place used to be peaceful. Monsters never wandered near Euclid. But after the recent disappearances... we can't risk leaving this unchecked."

"I see."

There was a brief silence before the captain added, "You don't act like the Trafalgar from the rumors."

Trafalgar smirked. "That supposed to be a compliment?"

"Well... the rumors were unkind."

"Let me guess. No talent. Useless. Bastard. Trash."

The captain's expression tensed slightly. "I see you've heard them."

"I have. And I don't care."

A sudden yelp cut through the quiet.

One of the horses in the back had stumbled, nearly throwing its rider. The group halted. When they turned to look, they finally noticed what they'd been walking over this entire time.

Massive footprints. Deep, sunken, and wide—far too large for anything they knew.

"You alright back there?" the captain called out.

"Yeah!" the soldier replied, adjusting his saddle. "Horse just tripped."

Trafalgar leaned over the side of his own mount, narrowing his eyes.

"God damn... These are huge."

The captain dismounted, crouching beside one of the impressions in the mud. He ran a gloved hand along the edge.

"Whatever made these... it's heavier than anything I've seen walk through this forest."

Trafalgar crossed his arms. "Bigger than the monster my father killed?"

"Your father?" the captain asked.

"He took down a beast thirty meters tall once."

The captain stood slowly. "...Then this might be bigger."

The wind picked up slightly.

The silence was unnatural.

No birdsong. No rustling leaves. Just the quiet crunch of hooves and boots over frozen mud, and the lingering awareness that something else was walking this forest. Or had been.

Trafalgar kept his hand near Maledicta's handle, eyes scanning the fog as the group moved forward in formation.

Then—

BOOM.

A thunderous pulse of mana tore through the ground like a shockwave.

There was no warning. No flash. Just a sudden burst of raw, condensed energy erupting from somewhere unseen.

The blast lifted everyone off the ground.

Trafalgar's ears rang as the world spun sideways. His vision blurred—the impact throwing him off his horse and into the air. He hit the earth with a thud, sliding across mud and snow before crashing into a fallen tree.

A sharp pain pulsed in his ribs, but nothing was broken.

He groaned, rolling to his side. "Damn... What the hell was that?! This body is crazy honestly."

He tried to stand, but the ground felt unstable—like the mana in the area had been distorted. The fog thickened rapidly around him, rising like steam from the forest floor.

"Captain!" he shouted. "Anyone?!"

No response.

He looked around, vision still spinning. The horses were gone. The soldiers too. It was like the forest had swallowed them.

Trafalgar cursed and activated a basic detection spell, but the interference was too dense. The feedback buzzed in his head—mana static.

He staggered forward, pushing through low branches, until he spotted something—or rather, someone.

Lying on the ground ahead was a figure.

Trafalgar approached cautiously, gripping Maledicta as it materialized in his hand.

The figure was humanoid, possibly male. Long black hair. No visible armor. Shirtless. But what made Trafalgar freeze mid-step were the two curved horns protruding from the sides of the head.

"...Shit," he muttered. "That's not one of ours."

He knelt beside the body, eyes narrowing.

"Hey," he said, giving the shoulder a light shake. "Are you injured?"

No response.

Trafalgar exhaled sharply. His instincts screamed at him. Something wasn't right.

He raised Maledicta, the edge of the blade glinting faintly with magical intent, and brought it closer to the figure's neck.

In that moment—

The figure's eyes snapped open.

Purple. Bright. Inhuman.

And in the blink of an eye, the stranger appeared behind Trafalgar, gripping the wrist that held the sword.

"I don't think that's how you wake someone up," the voice said smoothly, almost amused. "Especially someone like me. That deserves a little... punishment."

Trafalgar didn't hesitate.

The moment the stranger gripped his wrist, he twisted his body and invoked Widow's Whisper.

A dagger of curved silver materialized in his free hand with a burst of compressed mana, already in motion as he brought it toward the figure's neck in a precise counter-strike.

But it was pointless.

Before the blade could reach him, another hand clamped firmly around Trafalgar's left wrist.

He froze.

The man hadn't moved—because he was already there. Already behind him. Both of Trafalgar's arms were restrained with minimal effort, as if the stranger had been playing along the entire time.

"Two weapons?" the man said with a slight smirk, his voice low against Trafalgar's ear. "That's cute."

He held him there for another second, then slowly—almost politely—let go of both wrists and took a few steps back.

"You're quite fast for a Spark rank," the stranger said with a grin, "but not quite there yet."

Trafalgar staggered slightly but kept his footing. His breathing was tense.

The horned man tilted his head. "Come on now, no need for the swords. If I wanted to kill you, you'd be nothing more than bones by now."

A cold chill ran down Trafalgar's spine. His instincts agreed. This wasn't an empty threat—it was a simple fact.

Still, after a long pause, he reluctantly dismissed both weapons. Maledicta vanished with a shimmer. Widow's Whisper followed.

"Good," the man said cheerfully, taking a few steps back. "Just needed some space."

Then, without a word, he began to shift.

His body expanded, flesh melting into brilliant scales. Horns stretched longer, his arms became wings, and in a burst of raw mana, the figure before Trafalgar transformed into a dragon—a massive, ten-meter-long creature, scaled in black and deep silver, with purple eyes that burned like twin stars.

– Mordrek POV –

Far from the clearing, Mordrek suddenly stopped mid-step.

The pressure hit him like a wall—not violent, but absolute. Ancient mana, wild and refined at the same time. It wasn't chaotic... it was simply old

. Older than the forest. Older than him.

He turned his head slowly toward the northwest.

That's where Trafalgar had been sent.

A deep, guttural instinct stirred in his chest.

"Something just woke up," he muttered.

He glanced at Syllis, who rode beside him in the same horse. She looked confused, her senses clearly not sharp enough to feel what he did.

Mordrek gave a sharp whistle.

Three soldiers immediately pulled closer.

"You stay with her," he ordered, pointing at Syllis. "Don't let anything get near."

"My lord?"

"Don't question it. If something happens to her, I'll kill you myself."

Without waiting for a response, Mordrek stepped forward—and vanished.

He moved, propelled by mana-infused footwork, vanishing between trees in bursts of raw speed.

- Trafalgar POV -

Trafalgar's breath caught in his throat.

'A dragon. An actual, living dragon...'

The beast let out a low rumble—not a roar, just a presence—a sound that reverberated in his bones.

hen it shrank back down, folding into its humanoid form once more with fluid grace.

The man dusted off his shoulders and smirked. "Now do you know who I am?"

Trafalgar's mind raced.

He had seen that dragon before—from the sky, aboard Alfred's flying ship. Back then, it had been at least fifty meters long, soaring through the clouds like a god of war. A monster that dwarfed cities.

And now it stood before him, barely smiling.

"You... You're that dragon," Trafalgar said slowly. "From the ship. The one from back then."

The man placed a hand on his chest and gave a mock bow. "Guilty."

"...And your name?"

"Caelvyrn," he said. "You may call me that. Or 'great one,' I suppose. Either works."

Trafalgar narrowed his eyes. "Caelvyrn, alright I'm Trafalgar du Morgain."

Caelvyrn's grin widened. "Ah. A Morgain... with that kind of blood flowing through you?" He tilted his head. "You're a bastard child, then?"

Trafalgar tensed. "How do you know about my bloodline?"

Caelvyrn stepped forward, his eyes scanning him more carefully now. Not threatening—just curious.

"Because I can feel it," he said simply. "It pulses through you like a half-formed song. You carry the Primordial bloodline."

"...And you?"

"Oh, me?" Caelvyrn smiled wider. "I'm not like you. Mine is Draconic. Ancient, but distinct. You and I... we're not the same."