

Tyrant 99

Chapter 99: The Arrow in the Dark

Alfons moved first.

[Blazing Arc] A whip of fire lashed out across the cracked stone, searing through the damp air of the labyrinth. Trafalgar twisted his body sideways, pivoting his foot like a dancer mid-turn. The flames scorched past, close enough to sting his skin.

He barely had time to breathe before Alfons raised his wand again. Sleek white wood, etched with golden symbols, gleamed as the air above Trafalgar shimmered.

[Hydro Burst] A crashing stream of water erupted downward. Trafalgar slashed Maledicta upward in a sharp arc, splitting the torrent. The force still drenched one shoulder, knocking him to the ground with a splash. His back slammed into the wet stone, breath forced from his lungs.

"Pathetic," Alfons sneered, lowering his wand slightly as if the duel wasn't worth his full effort. "Is this truly the cursed heir of House Morgain? I expected more than a soaked rat crawling on the floor."

Trafalgar forced himself up to one knee, coughing water from his throat. His fingers tightened around Maledicta's hilt, knuckles pale.

Shit...he's faster, stronger, sharper. A whole two Core of difference—it's like being crushed beneath a mountain.'

The ground trembled as Alfons carved a sigil into the air with his wand.

[Stone Spike] The stone beneath Trafalgar shattered, jagged spikes erupting upward. He flung himself sideways, rolling across the floor, but the edge of a spike carved a bloody line across his arm.

Alfons laughed as if toying with a child. His red eyes glowed with cruel amusement, watching Trafalgar struggle to stand.

"You can't even dodge properly. Come now, bastard—entertain me a little longer before I finish this."

Trafalgar wiped the blood on his sleeve and smirked faintly despite the pain.

'Keep laughing, motherfucker. The longer you play around, the more time I steal from you.'

Alfons circled him slowly, his wand spinning between his fingers with casual grace. Sparks of fire and droplets of water lingered in the air around him, proof of his mastery over multiple elements. He looked more like an artist playing with colors than a fighter in a duel.

"Do you know what separates nobles from gutter-born mongrels like you, Morgain?" Alfons' lips curled into a grin as he stopped in front of Trafalgar. "Power. Refinement. Legacy. You may carry the Morgain's name, but you're nothing but a stain on it."

Another flick of his wand. [Gale Push] A sudden burst of wind slammed into Trafalgar's chest, throwing him back against the wall. His ribs groaned with the impact.

He spat blood onto the ground, then pushed himself upright, smirking despite the copper taste in his mouth.

"Funny," Trafalgar rasped. "For someone who claims nobility, you waste a lot of time beating on someone weaker than you. What's wrong, Alfons? Need to inflate your ego before you face a real fight?"

Alfons chuckled, amused rather than angered. "Careful, rat. Keep barking like that, and I might actually put you down."

He twirled his wand again, drawing on another element. The ground beneath Trafalgar quivered. [Earthen Shackles] jagged chains of stone burst upward, snapping around his ankles and dragging him down to his knees.

Alfons leaned closer, lowering his voice so only Trafalgar could hear.

"This is the end. Crawl, and I might let you go without any more shame."

Trafalgar strained against the stone binding his legs, his muscles trembling. He met Alfons' crimson gaze with defiance, lips curling into a grin.

"You talk too much. For someone at Flow Core, you're surprisingly desperate for validation. Maybe you're not as impressive as you think."

For the first time, Alfons' grin faltered, his eyes narrowing. Then he laughed again, louder, enjoying the audacity.

The stone shackles clamped tighter around Trafalgar's ankles, digging into his flesh. Alfons stood tall, wand in hand, fire and water swirling together in his grasp, forming a deadly vortex of heat and steam.

"Any last words, bastard of Morgain?" Alfons sneered, his crimson eyes glowing with amusement.

Trafalgar spat blood onto the ground, his lips curling into a grin despite the pain.

"Yeah... you talk too much."

With a surge of defiance, he forced mana through his legs. The shackles cracked—just enough. Shadows wrapped around his form as he invoked [Severance Step]. In the blink of an eye, he tore himself free, dashing forward with a blurred motion. Maledicta's edge arced upward in a desperate slash.

The blade clashed against Alfons' barrier, sparks flying as steel screamed against invisible glass. For a heartbeat, Alfons was pushed back a single step.

"Pathetic," Alfons said, laughter bubbling up from his throat. "Still, I like it. Keep struggling, Morgain. It makes this more entertaining."

Trafalgar's chest heaved, his vision swimming, but he smirked through the exhaustion.

Alfons raised his wand high, mana surging in a blazing crescendo. Fire licked the air, water hissed, and the ground itself cracked under the pressure. "You lost this time."

And then—

Thwip!

A silver arrow cut through the heat, piercing straight through Alfons' head. His smirk froze, his body stuttered—and in the next instant, his entire form shattered into fragments of light.

Cynthia stepped out from the shadows, lowering her bow. "Took you long enough to distract him."

Trafalgar collapsed onto one knee, panting heavily. He tilted his head back, a ragged chuckle escaping him. "Glad to be of service..."

The battlefield fell silent, save for his labored breaths.

- Council of the Overseers POV -

Dozens of images flickered across them, showing students clashing with monsters, wandering through dead ends, or collapsing from exhaustion.

But one mirror shone brighter than the rest—the fight between Trafalgar du Morgain and Alfons au Vaelion.

One Overseer leaned forward, his voice low and thoughtful. "That Morgain boy... he should have lost immediately. A Spark Core standing against a Flow? He has somehow held up, and you could also see how the one from House Vaelion was playing with him..."

Another scoffed, fingers tapping the armrest of her chair. "Endured, perhaps, but only by stalling. Still, there's potential. Too much defiance in his eyes to call him weak."

A third Overseer chuckled. "And the girl—Cynthia, was it? That arrow was no ordinary strike. Promising. Very promising."

The chamber hummed with murmurs, opinions weaving into a chorus of judgment.

At the center of them, Kaelen sat silent. His sharp gaze lingered on Trafalgar's collapsing figure in the mirror, shoulders heaving with exhaustion, eyes still burning with stubborn resolve.

'I knew it... I had to keep my eyes on him,' Kaelen thought, fingers brushing his beard. 'Even against impossible odds. Really interesting.'

His lips curved into the faintest smile before it faded into regret.

'But what a pity... he is no mage. I cannot shape him, cannot guide his path. His blade will carve its own way... and the world will have to see where it leads.'

The mirrors dimmed, the Overseers' discussions trailing into silence. The test continued, but for Kaelen, one name was already etched in memory.

Trafalgar du Morgain.