

Tyrant 35

Chapter 35: No Rest for the Cursed

The serpent moved like lightning.

Its fanged maw opened wide—wider than anything Trafalgar had ever seen—and lunged.

He tried to dive to the side, but the beast twisted mid-air, impossibly fast for its size. In one fluid motion, it clamped down on him—torso, head, and all—swallowing him whole with a sickening shlrkk.

Darkness swallowed him.

The world turned into pressure and rot.

He tumbled through flesh and muscle, the tunnel of its throat closing around him like a living vice. The air was hot. Wet. Every breath choked him with the rancid stench of blood, bile, and half-digested meat. His arms were pinned. Slippery mucus clung to his skin like tar, thick and suffocating.

Inside.

He was inside the damn thing.

'No—no no no—fuck no!'

He struggled to move, boots kicking against twitching muscle walls. The beast's gullet squeezed tighter as it tried to crush him, digest him. Bones cracked somewhere nearby. Acid burned at his clothes.

But Maledicta still pulsed in his hand—wreathed in flame and venom, a silent promise of death.

Trafalgar clenched his jaw, teeth grinding together. His vision blurred from the heat.

"You're not digesting me, you ugly fuck."

"[Arc Slash]"

The sword ignited—flame and poison twisting into a storm of searing light.

The slash tore forward, carving an incandescent arc through the serpent's insides. Fire bloomed inside its organs, boiling its blood from within. The venom reacted violently with stomach acid, causing a chemical chain reaction that detonated pockets of toxic gas.

From the outside, the serpent's body bulged grotesquely—veins popping, scales splitting—before a massive rupture split it open along the midsection.

KRAAAKH!

A thunderous explosion of fire, blood, and entrails burst outward, shredding the beast from the inside out. Chunks of flesh rained across the snow. The serpent's dying scream was cut off instantly, gurgling as steam and smoke poured from the cavity where its core organs used to be.

And then—

A silhouette stumbled out of the torn ruin.

Trafalgar.

He fell forward from the steaming corpse, landing on all fours, coughing up slime and smoke. His entire body was coated in thick mucus, digestive acid, and half-digested meat. Steam rolled off him in waves. His coat had been partially melted at the edges, but Maledicta still burned in his grip, flickering like a vengeful spirit.

He collapsed to his knees, coughing violently.

Blood and black ichor dripped from his hair.

Behind him, the serpent's corpse twitched one last time—then finally slumped, still and torn in half.

The system pinged.

[Skill: Arc Slash] has leveled up to Lv.2!

New Effect Unlocked: Deals +10% bonus damage to reptilian-type enemies.

Trafalgar wiped his face with a trembling hand.

"...Fucking disgusting."

He looked back at the twitching corpse, then at Maledicta. The blade was still burning faintly, steam rising from the venom-stained edge.

"At least I leveled up."

Trafalgar stood there for a moment, catching his breath. His entire body felt like it had been through a grinder—scrapes, bruises, burning lungs, and a lingering sourness clinging to his clothes from the serpent's insides.

He looked back at the snake's corpse. Charred flesh, venom-soaked scales...

He narrowed his eyes.

"...Is snake meat even edible?"

It was tempting. But one glance at the steaming pile of reptilian gore, and the thought vanished.

'No fucking way. All his body is covered in venom, there is no way I'm eating that, I will need to find something else that's not poisoned.'

He exhaled, letting the tension drain from his shoulders.

The fight was over. But he wasn't out of danger yet.

He glanced at the sheer wall above—the only path forward.

'It's climb or die.'

And he was exhausted.

His legs trembled with every step. His vision blurred. The constant alertness and pain had pushed him past his limit.

He needed rest.

He found a dry patch near the cavern wall, far from the water. Lowering himself carefully, he laid the torch beside him and sat down with a groan.

The ground was hard.

Still better than a serpent's stomach.

He leaned back against the rock, and let his eyes fall shut.

'Just a quick nap. Then I climb.'

Sleep took him in seconds.

- Lysandra POV -

Lysandra stood at the edge, arms crossed tightly over her chest as the last of the rescue team climbed out of the seemingly bottomless pit. Their armor was coated in dust, their expressions grim.

One of the demon soldiers stepped forward and bowed his head respectfully.

"Lady Lysandra... we searched as deep as the rope allowed."

"And?"

"Three corpses. Two were Morgain soldiers. The third... Zar'khael. No trace of the young master."

Lysandra looked down, closing her eyes for a moment. The cold air burned her lungs.

"Are you certain? No signs of life? Nothing?"

"Nothing, my lady. We called out, waited... no reply."

Lysandra swallowed hard. The hollow in her gut wasn't from hunger.

'Trafalgar...'

He had finally begun to rise. To earn respect. To stop being just "the bastard."

And now this.

"I'll report to Lord Valtair," she said, her voice steady despite the weight in her chest. "Does Lord Malakar have a messaging device?"

The patriarch of the Zar'khael, standing with his back to them, replied without turning:

"There's one in the carriage. Ask for it in my name."

Lysandra nodded.

"Thank you."

As she walked away, her thoughts spun relentlessly.

'No body... does that mean he's still alive?'

Hope was dangerous. But right now, it was all she had.

- Trafalgar POV -

Trafalgar woke up with a grimace.

'The hell...?'

His entire body was itching—no, burning. He sat up sharply, blinking in the dim torchlight. When he looked down, he finally saw it: his noble clothes were practically fully dissolved, threads curling off his skin, torn by acid and battle.

But beneath them... the [Leather Undersuit – Uncommon Rank] remained untouched.

'Guess that paid off.'

He stripped off the ruined fabric and stood at the edge of the underground pool. Cold air bit at his skin, but he didn't hesitate this time. With a sharp breath, he jumped in.

The freezing water hit like a spell—shocking, cleansing, painful. But he welcomed it.

He scrubbed off the blood, the grime, the dried venom and monster gunk. It stung. A lot.

But it felt good to wash away the filth.

After a few minutes, he stepped out, water dripping from his hair and skin. He picked up the torch, wrung out what was left of the noble garments, and tossed them aside.

He looked up at the wall of stone in front of him—the beginning of his climb out.

Trafalgar narrowed his eyes.

'Time to go up.'