

## Tyrant 51

Chapter 51: Ashes and Gold

The battlefield was quiet.

Snow continued to fall gently over the blood-soaked clearing, flakes melting as they touched the bodies strewn across the ground. Crimson painted the frost like spilled ink on parchment—five corpses, twisted, burned, sliced apart in unnatural ways. The fire from earlier had dimmed, leaving only faint orange coals and the acrid scent of blood and ash.

Trafalgar stumbled back, his knees buckling as he collapsed onto the frozen ground. He landed hard, sitting with his legs outstretched, chest heaving.

"Huf..."

His breath formed visible clouds in the cold, mixing with the steam rising from the freshly dead. His shirt clung to him—drenched in sweat, spotted with cuts and soot. The taste of iron lingered on his tongue.

He stared at the corpses for a long moment.

Beren's body still twitched faintly from residual nerve spasms. Rusk's eyes were frozen wide open, veins blackened from the poison. Dren's headless corpse leaned sideways, staining the snow around it like spilled wine.

Trafalgar didn't move.

'I handled it... somehow. Still not used to this. I've killed before—but watching them rot in front of me? I'll never enjoy this. Or I hope it stays this way so I know I'm still human.'

He let his head fall back and stared at the sky.

It was such a clean blue.

'Earth was a shitty place, but this... This world is worse. Here, it's always them or me. No second chances.'

His gloved hand sank into the snow beside him.

'Good thing I learned to ride a damn horse.'

For a few minutes, Trafalgar didn't move. He just sat there, letting his pulse slow, his mind catch up with his body.

Then, slowly, he rose.

His muscles screamed in protest, his spine ached, and his shoulder felt like it had been smashed by a hammer. But he stood.

It was time to collect what was his.

With a flick of his wrist, Trafalgar lowered Maledicta and let his fingers release the grip. The blade shimmered once—then dissolved into black particles that vanished into the air like smoke returning to shadow.

'Rest for now.'

He turned his gaze to the bodies.

The snow was beginning to settle on them, thin layers dusting over leather and blood. He stepped over Rusk's massive form and knelt beside Dren's corpse, now headless but still clutching at the dirt in death.

He searched quickly.

No hidden blade. No enchanted pendant. No artifacts tucked into boots or belts.

But—

A heavy coin pouch.

Trafalgar unhooked it and nearly dropped it from the sheer weight.

"...You've got to be kidding me."

He opened the bag and gold spilled through his fingers—pure golden coins, stamped with the eight-pointed seal of the central mint. Not just a few. Dozens. Hundreds. They glittered under the weak daylight like salvation.

His eyes lit up.

"HAHAHAHA!"

His laughter echoed through the forest, wild and unfiltered. It mixed horribly with the dead air and burning scent, like madness given voice.

'If anyone saw me like this... five bodies, snow painted red, and me cackling over a bag of money—they'd think I lost my mind.'

But he didn't care.

'I'm rich. Wait—calm down. I don't even know how this world's economy works yet.'

He stuffed the coins into his pants and moved to the other bodies. Most were empty—one had a broken necklace, another a bloodstained pouch of dried meat. But the third—

A dagger.

Short, curved slightly forward, with a dull-blue sheen to its blade and jagged teeth along the edge near the hilt. Not standard issue.

[Item Acquired: Widow's Whisper – Rare Rank]

Type: Weapon - Dagger

Effect: Slight increase to bleeding duration on physical cuts. Concealed blade near grip (spring-loaded).

Trafalgar spun it between his fingers, testing its weight.

'Useful. Compact. And sharp.'

He narrowed his eyes.

'Let's see something...'

He stepped back from the corpses and took a wide stance. With a deep breath, he channeled mana through his arm and raised the dagger in both hands. His mind recalled the movement perfectly—the buildup, the breath, the momentum.

[Severing Fang]

He lunged forward and slashed down in a diagonal arc.

A ripple of pressure burst from the dagger—not as wide or powerful as with Maledicta, but unmistakably the same move. The snow in front of him parted in a clean diagonal split, carved down to the frostbitten soil.

He grinned.

'So it seems it works with any blade-shaped weapon. Good. Very good.'

With a rare flicker of satisfaction, Trafalgar slid the dagger into his belt and turned toward the horses.

It was time to deal with the mess.

The wind blew harder now, carrying the heavy scent of blood and smoke through the mountain pass. Trafalgar approached the row of tethered horses—six in total. Two had been meant for the carriage. The other four belonged to the mercenaries.

He eyed the sleek black one near the edge of the group. Its coat shimmered with sweat, breath puffing visibly in the cold. It met his eyes calmly.

"You'll do."

He grabbed the reins and led the horse a few meters forward, tying it loosely to a protruding rock. Then, without a second glance, he turned back to the remaining five.

He moved down the line, dagger in hand, and severed the reins one by one.

"Go," he said, swatting each of them lightly on the hindquarters. "You're free. I've got enough problems."

The horses bolted, hooves thundering through the snow as they vanished between the trees.

Trafalgar returned to the center of the camp where the bodies still lay. Wordlessly, he began dragging them one by one toward the carriage.

Kael. Rusk. Tovin. Beren.

Finally, Dren—headless and heavy—heaved in with a grunt.

He searched briefly inside the wagon and found a sack of dry fabric. Ripping it open, he scattered the cloth over the corpses like kindling. With a flick of his wrist, a small flame ignited in his hand thanks to the torch that appeared.

[Blazewick Torch – Common Rank]

The flickering light painted his expression in red and orange as he brought the torch closer into the pile. It caught fast—cloth curling, smoke rising. Within moments, the interior was ablaze. Flames licked the curtains, climbed the wooden walls, and began devouring the evidence.

Trafalgar turned away, stepping toward the lone black horse waiting for him.

Behind him, the fire roared.

'Tch. Let's get out of here before the stench gets worse.'

He mounted the horse, gripping the reins, and gave it a slight nudge with his heels.

The animal obeyed.

They moved forward, hooves crunching over frozen mud and scattered ash. The cold bit deeper as the sun dipped further behind the peaks. But Trafalgar didn't flinch.

Then he stopped.

Looked left.

Looked right.

Paused.

"No idea where I'm going," he muttered, pinching the bridge of his nose.

His balance slipped slightly, and he wobbled in the saddle.

"Shit—who designed roads without signs?!"

The horse snorted.

Trafalgar straightened up, grumbled something under his breath, and pulled the reins forward.

"Let's just go. I'll figure it out on the way..."

They disappeared into the snowy dusk—one boy, one horse, and zero sense of direction.