

Tyrant 10

Chapter 10: The Dinner

Trafalgar sat cross-legged on the cold stone floor of his room, eyes closed, trying to focus. He was meditating, attempting to circulate mana through his Core.

'Filling this damn mana core is slow as hell. It's like trying to collect grains of sand one by one... and I don't think I have that much time to evolve, considering I'm already fifteen. This whole thing is such a pain in the ass.'

He sighed and stood up, stretching his back.

'So it turns out everyone here has a system like mine. That's... disappointing. I thought I had some cheat like in those manhwas and anime. Guess not. Item storage, menus, stat screens — everyone has that shit. But my [Talent: SSS]... that, at least, is something special. If I work hard enough, I might actually survive this world.'

He made his way to the bathroom and turned on the shower. Cold water hit his body, but he didn't flinch.

'If I'm stuck in this world, I might as well enjoy some of its luxuries. Not gonna live like a damn peasant.'

After the shower, he found a navy-blue formal outfit neatly laid out — something Mayla had prepared for the dinner. Trafalgar dressed himself, adjusting the sleeves, the collar, and brushing off imaginary dust. Then, he sat at his desk and waited.

Fifteen minutes later — knock knock knock.

"Are you ready, young master?" came Mayla's voice from the door.

"Yes," Trafalgar replied.

She entered, looked him over, and gave a satisfied nod. Still, she moved closer and made small adjustments — straightening his collar, fixing his cuffs, and brushing back a loose strand of his hair.

"Now you're ready," she smiled. "Come, I'll take you to the dinner hall. Just... try to stay strong. They'll probably provoke you. Please don't get into a fight."

Trafalgar nodded. "Don't worry. I don't plan to cause trouble. I'll eat and leave."

But in his mind, he wasn't so sure.

'If only it were that easy. I'm the damn spotlight tonight just because they suddenly invited me after all these years. When was the last time...? Right — five years ago, when Trafalgar was ten. Great. But I didn't lie. I'm not looking for problems... I'll just answer Valttair's questions and be done with it.'

Mayla led him through the wide halls of the Morgain estate. Golden candelabras glowed overhead, casting flickering light powered by mana crystals.

Eventually, they reached the tall double doors of the dining hall. A guard inside opened them as they approached.

'Did he sense us? Must be a trained soldier.'

Mayla gave him a nod. "I'll leave you here, young master. Good luck."

Trafalgar stepped inside, face calm, posture upright — and eyes sharp.

The heavy double doors opened with a slow groan, revealing the grandeur of the Morgain dining hall — high vaulted ceilings, a polished obsidian floor, and a long table stretching nearly the length of the room.

Trafalgar stepped in, shoulders squared, breath steady. But inside, he felt the familiar sting of invisible daggers — every gaze at that table was aimed directly at him.

He didn't flinch.

At the head of the table sat Valttair du Morgain, dressed in midnight black robes trimmed with gold, exuding both command and cold indifference. Beside him, on his right, sat Seraphine, elegant and pale, her crimson nails tapping lightly against her wine glass. Next to her was Naevia, with a glassy smile that didn't quite reach her eyes. Across from them were Verena and Ysolde, both equally composed, though Ysolde shot Trafalgar a brief glance of veiled contempt.

On the flanks of the table, his siblings had already taken their places:

Closest to him, on the near end, were the youngest: Darion and Elira, both avoiding his eyes.

A bit farther up: Nym, playing with his knife, and Sylvar, who barely looked up from his plate.

On the far side, clustered among the eldest:

Rivena, lounging with one arm draped along the back of her chair, eyes half-lidded and fixed on him with unmistakable heat.

Helgar, towering and silent.

Lysandra, her expression unreadable, though she gave him the smallest of nods — a flicker of acknowledgement.

And Maron, as stoic and unmoving as a statue.

'Whatever. I'm not that trafalgar anymore. Let's get this over with.'

A fork tapped against a glass — one of the servants giving the signal.

Valttair lifted a hand.

Silence fell.

The dinner was about to begin.

The plates had begun to arrive — steaming wyvern meat, thick mana-root soup, and goblets of blood-red wine passed around with the grace of trained servants. The air was heavy with perfume, heat, and a tension so thick it could be cut with a blade.

Trafalgar sat beside Elira, eyes scanning the room with practiced detachment.

"So, you finally crawled out of whatever hole you've been hiding in, little brother?"

That was Nym, voice sharp with mockery, not even bothering to look up from his drink.

Trafalgar didn't flinch. He picked up his glass of water and took a sip.

'Right on schedule. They can say whatever they want blah blah blah, deaf ears, I don't want to know anything'

"Not speaking? Did you lose your tongue all these years?"

Sylvar, leaning back, wearing that bored expression he always had when tormenting someone less talented.

"Maybe he never had proper schooling. I mean, why waste books on a disappointment?"

That was Verena, low and elegant, as if she was talking about the weather. Ysolde beside her gave a slight chuckle.

'Jesus. It's like they rehearse this shit every time.'

"Enough," Lysandra said sharply. Her voice sliced through the murmurs like steel. "He's here because Father requested it. That should be enough."

There was a pause. A quiet, jagged breath of silence.

Then came the inevitable voice — silken, too sweet to be sincere.

"Oh, don't be so harsh, sister," Rivena said, brushing a strand of silver hair behind her ear. "I, for one, am glad he came. He's... grown. Stronger. Quite the change from that trembling little boy we used to know."

Trafalgar didn't look at her.

'She's fucking insane. How is no one saying anything?'

"I wonder," she continued, running a finger along her wineglass, "did you change inside too? Or are you still that soft thing that cried when we hid your sword?"

Elira, next to him, shifted uncomfortably. Her eyes stayed down.

"Can you not?" Darion muttered, though barely above a whisper.

"Oh, come now," said Naevia, her smile too polished to be real. "They're just reminiscing. Siblings do that."

"Indeed," Seraphine chimed in. "So many touching memories. I remember how he'd beg the instructors to let him skip mana classes. Said the skills made his head hurt."

Trafalgar said nothing. He cut into his food with clinical calm.

'Buddha mode, I don't listen to anything lalala, wait I'm 3 years old? What I am doing also I'm not the old Trafalgar, although you don't know that.'

"Anyway," Ysolde said softly, "try not to run off crying this time. It would be... unbecoming."

Helgar let out a quiet grunt. Maron remained still, as if carved from stone.

"Don't worry, brother," Nym added with a smirk. "This time we'll draw you a map back to your room."

The fork in Trafalgar's hand trembled for just a second.

'Breathe. Breathe. They want a reaction. Don't give it to them.'

Across the table, Lysandra was watching him. Just a slight twitch in her brow — maybe concern, maybe warning.

'She's the only one here who doesn't make me want to set the place on fire.'

And then Rivena again, humming playfully.

"It's always so much fun when you join us. Really, you should do it more often."

Trafalgar didn't respond. Just drove his knife clean through the meat and ate slowly, deliberately.

'One day, you'll all choke on this fucking table, you going first dear sis, I still had to live through the memories of Trafalgar because of you...'

The knives scraped against porcelain. The murmurs and smug remarks had quieted. All eyes were slowly turning toward the head of the table.

Valttair du Morgain — silent until now — lifted his gaze. A man carved of command. Grey eyes sharp as steel, voice low but echoing with weight.

"Trafalgar."

The sound of his name dropped like a stone into still water.

Trafalgar froze mid-cut.

'Here we go.'

He looked up, meeting the patriarch's gaze.

Valttair continued.

"You've awakened your Core."

It wasn't a question. It was a statement. A declaration before the court.

Trafalgar nodded once.

"Yes, Father."

The word still tasted wrong in his mouth.

Valttair said nothing for a long second. A flicker passed through Valttair's eyes — faint, but not missed by those paying attention.

"How long did it take?"

Trafalgar looked up, surprised. He swallowed the piece of meat he was chewing.

"If I remember correctly, I think it was a bit under an hour. I lost track of time, so I'm not sure, Father."

Every head turned. A silent shock rippled through the table. Even the wives glanced toward him, surprised.

And then, Valtair laughed.

Trafalgar blinked, confused. He leaned slightly toward Elira.

"What's so funny?"

Elira, despite not being particularly fond of him, answered quietly.

"What do you mean what's so funny? It's weird, you know. Awakening a Core at fifteen? And in one night?"

"Why?"

Before she could respond, Valtair spoke again, his tone firm and low.

"Seems I was right to keep you that night."

Trafalgar turned toward him, eyes narrowing slightly.

"Forgive me, Father, but... what was so funny? I'm sorry, but I'm a bit lost."

Valttair nodded, as if expecting that.

"You see, Trafalgar, you spent years trying to awaken your Core—and then you stopped. When someone halts their training, even for a day, they lose all the momentum they've built. That means... you awakened your Core from scratch. In under an hour. At the age of fifteen. For a Morgain, the usual age is three."

Seraphine smiled, her tone sharp.

"Yes, dear. That's very late, actually. Twelve years late, to be precise."

The laughter came. Mocking chuckles echoed from around the table. Rivena louder than the rest. Only Lysandra remained still. The other wives whispered with thin smiles.

Valttair raised a hand.

"Enough."

The silence returned like a blade.

He set down his wine glass.

"Let's move on. Trafalgar, in three months, you'll be sent to the Academy. You'll stay there until you turn eighteen. Do not tarnish the name of our family. The heirs of the other Great Houses will be there too. We cannot afford to appear weak."

The wives began murmuring again. Several of the siblings snickered, others rolled their eyes. Trafalgar just kept eating calmly.

'Fuck, this is incredible. I never got to taste anything like this back on Earth.'

Then, the doors opened violently. A soldier rushed in, armor clanking, face pale.

Valttair stood at once, his golden gaze sharp.

"This better be important enough to interrupt my dinner with my family."

The soldier saluted.

"It's urgent, my lord. The villages surrounding the estate are under attack."

Valttair didn't hesitate.

"Helgar. Rivena. Elira. Trafalgar. With me."

Trafalgar exhaled, dropped his fork and stood up slowly.

'Oh for fuck's sake.'