

Tyrant 107

Chapter 107: Improved Local

The train screeched to a halt at the station, and Trafalgar stepped into the chaotic flow of people. The building was bursting with life—merchants haggling, nobles strutting in tailored robes, adventurers preparing for quests, and students chatting in groups. Humans mingled with elves carrying bundles of herbs and scrolls, dwarfs dragging crates of ore and metal, vampires cloaked in dark silks offering rare potions, and lycans hauling heavy cargo with ease. All kinds of races moved about in their own trades and duties, their differences blending into the restless rhythm of Velkaris. No wonder; the massive structure next door was none other than the central hub of Gates, the magical pathways that connected Velkaris to other major cities.

'Now that I think about it... maybe I should visit Mordrek and the others one of these days. Just to see how they're doing.'

He moved with the crowd until he managed to break free into the evening-lit streets of Velkaris. Mana lamps glowed pale blue, street vendors shouted out their prices, and carriages rattled across cobblestones. Compared to the quiet academy, this place was overwhelming.

Trafalgar shoved his hands into his pockets as his thoughts drifted back to the folded paper inside. Selara's list of materials.

'Honestly, I don't even recognize half of those names... I never paid attention to crafting in the first game. Why bother when I could just buy everything other players made? Yeah, I was a whale back then—and apparently still am here, throwing money left and right.'

He turned down a side street, then another, until he found the narrow alleyway he was looking for. At the very end stood his newly acquired property. Or at least, it should have stood quietly. Instead, the alley was cluttered with crates, half-open cans of paint, brushes, and tools scattered everywhere.

The wooden door was propped open, though a sign hung crookedly across it: "Closed for Renovation."

Trafalgar stopped, raised an eyebrow, then smirked. 'Closed, huh? Well, if it's mine, why not go in?'

With that, he stepped through the doorway.

Inside, the smell of fresh paint mixed with the heavy smoke of tobacco. Arden sat with his boots propped up on the wooden table, a thick cigar resting between his fingers. He looked far too relaxed for someone overseeing renovations.

When he spotted Trafalgar, his wrinkled face split into a grin.

"Oh, boy! Didn't expect you back so soon. I figured you'd be buried in your fancy classes for weeks before showing up here again."

Trafalgar raised a brow, his eyes flicking to the cigar. "Since when do you smoke? You look a little too comfortable for someone supposed to be working."

Arden chuckled, tapping ash into a chipped cup.

"Not a habit, don't worry. Just a way to celebrate the good things. And trust me—there are more of those now than there used to be."

His gaze drifted toward the walls, and for a moment, his tone softened.

"When this place was still mine and Marella's, we saved every coin we could. Wanted Garrika to have a future where she didn't need to lift a finger if she didn't want to. Because of that, we never put much back into the tavern. Place always looked abandoned."

Trafalgar nodded, understanding more than he expected. Arden gave a short laugh, then gestured at the empty chair opposite him.

"Sit, sit. No point talking while you're standing around."

Raising his voice, Arden called out toward the back, "Marella! The boy's here to see us!"

Footsteps followed, and soon a woman with neatly tied gray hair in a low bun stepped out. Her eyes—warm yet sharp—studied Trafalgar before softening into a smile.

"Trafalgar, it's good to see you again. Come, the others are in the back. You should join us."

As she spoke, Arden stubbed out his cigar and walked over to shut the tavern door, locking it with a quiet click. His expression told Trafalgar enough—whatever was happening next, it wasn't for outsiders.

Trafalgar stepped through the doorway into the back of the tavern—and froze.

From the outside, the place had looked like an abandoned husk. Inside, however, it was a different world. Polished wooden floors gleamed under lantern light, long tables lined with clean tablecloths stretched across the hall, and a brand-new mission board hung on the wall. The air smelled of wood varnish and fresh paint, carried by the sounds of hammers and laughter.

Humans, elves, dwarfs, even a pale vampire clerk worked side by side, each tending to their craft. A giant-sized man hauled beams across the room as though they weighed nothing, while two lycans in their half-beast forms hammered frames into place, their claws surprisingly precise.

Sitting near the corner, Garrika stood out immediately. She wore a white sleeveless top that left her midriff bare, her toned stomach and wagging tail impossible to ignore. The moment her green eyes spotted Trafalgar, her face lit up like a child on festival day.

"Trafalgar!"

Before he could react, she bolted across the room, leapt, and wrapped her arms around his neck, nearly knocking him off balance.

"Hey—what the—" Trafalgar staggered, surprised by the sheer force of her hug. Last time they'd spoken, she'd been cold, defensive because of the misunderstanding in the brothel. This warmth was... unexpected.

"Alright, down you go." Ronan's voice came from behind. With only one arm, he grabbed Garrika by the back of her shirt and lifted her off Trafalgar like she was a kitten.

Trafalgar's gaze flicked to the empty sleeve. "Are you sure you should be doing that?"

Ronan smirked. "I only lost an arm, not my head. Arden gave me work here. No need to swing swords anymore."

"Good," Trafalgar muttered. "Would've been a shame if you lost both."

Garrika pouted, cheeks puffed, but Ronan burst into laughter.

Arden stepped forward, brushing the ash from his cigar before pointing toward the hall. "So? What do you think of the place now, boy?"

Trafalgar's eyes roamed the room. The improvements were impossible to ignore. Tables were neatly arranged in even rows, polished until they gleamed. The bar counter—once dull and sticky—was now rebuilt with sturdy oak, bottles lined up like soldiers on parade.

The mission board on the wall was already filled with requests, its parchment edges fluttering whenever the door opened.

Workers of every race moved with purpose: dwarfs measuring wood, elves etching decorative runes, humans carrying crates, and lycans patrolling the room with boundless energy. It didn't feel like a neglected tavern anymore. It felt like a guild.

Trafalgar exhaled through his nose and leaned back slightly. "A decent place, finally," he slipped a hand into his coat and pulled out a folded piece of paper. He laid it flat on the table between them. The writing, dense and technical, was unmistakably alchemical.

"I need these materials," Trafalgar said simply.

The noise of hammers and chatter carried on behind them, but at that moment, the three of them stood apart from it all. Arden's eyes narrowed as he scanned the list, while Marella leaned over his shoulder to take a look.