

Tyrant 110

Chapter 110: Crossing Gates

Waiting at the entrance was Garrika.

Her long black hair hung loose down her back, swaying faintly with the breeze. She wore a black sleeveless top that revealed the toned curve of her stomach, paired with tight black trousers that clung to her frame. The outfit had a tactical air, as if she were prepared to fight at any moment. But what caught Trafalgar's eye most were the subtle movements of her wolf features: her tail flicked back and forth with a life of its own, and her pointed ears perked high the instant she spotted him approaching.

Her green eyes lit up with warmth. "Hello, Trafalgar!" she called, her voice lively.

"Good afternoon," he answered with a small nod. "Are you ready? We planned to stay there for a few days—don't you need a change of clothes?"

Garrika grinned, shaking her head. "No worries. I have two items for that. One's a night robe, and the other is armor—just like this." She gestured to her current outfit.

Trafalgar raised an eyebrow. "That's armor?"

"More or less," she replied with a shrug. "It's comfortable for combat, and if I fully transform, it won't tear apart."

"Good," Trafalgar muttered. His gaze shifted toward her pocket. "Behind you—you have the list, right? I left it here the other day."

She patted her trousers with confidence. "Safe and sound. I memorized everything, so you can relax." Her eyes narrowed playfully. "But tell me... what exactly do you need all this for?"

Trafalgar's reply was calm but evasive. "To have something crafted. Something that'll help me find someone."

Her ears twitched, curiosity sparking, but she didn't push further. "Hmm. Well, I hope we succeed."

Trafalgar appreciated her restraint. 'Good. At least she doesn't press when I don't want to explain.'

The walk from the alley to the train station didn't take long, and just beside the station loomed a large structure buzzing with activity: the Gate Hall.

Tall marble pillars framed the building. Inside, concentric circles of mana shimmered within massive archways, each Gate humming with restrained power. Streams of light flickered across the floor whenever someone passed through, leaving ripples like water disturbed.

Garrika led the way with her tail swaying lazily behind her, though her sharp eyes scanned the hall out of habit. Trafalgar followed.

They stopped at one of the less crowded counters. A receptionist with a neat uniform looked up, polite but brisk.

"Good morning. Two passes to Mariven Port, correct? That'll be twenty silver in total."

Trafalgar placed a single gold coin on the counter. "Keep it simple."

The receptionist's eyes widened slightly at the generosity before quickly composing himself. He handed over a small tray of change—eighty silver coins neatly stacked. "Thank you, sir. Now, if I may... we'll need your names for the record. Travel to Mariven is monitored closely—it's a small but well-protected trade city."

Garrika answered without hesitation. "Garrika."

Trafalgar followed. "Trafalgar du Morgain."

The receptionist froze for a moment, recognition flickering in his eyes. He bowed his head slightly. "Ah... a Morgain. My apologies, sir. We must check every name, it's only for security."

Trafalgar waved off the formality with ease. "I understand. No problem."

The man smiled with relief. "Very well. You may pass whenever you wish. Step onto the circle, and the Gate will carry you directly to Mariven Port."

The archway behind them pulsed brighter, beckoning with strands of blue-white light. Garrika's tail flicked in anticipation as she looked at Trafalgar.

"Ready?"

He gave a short nod. Together, they stepped toward the Gate.

A flash of light engulfed them as they crossed the threshold. For a heartbeat, everything dissolved into a swirl of blue mana—then the world reformed around them.

Salt and wind hit Trafalgar's senses all at once. He blinked rapidly, adjusting to the sudden brightness. Before him stretched a sight he had never truly seen in this world: the sea.

A vast, endless expanse of blue rolled out beyond the harbor walls, waves glittering under the sun. The air carried the tang of salt and the faint musk of fish. Wooden ships, some small and others towering with sails unfurled, crowded the docks. Sailors shouted over one another as cranes hoisted crates from the holds, merchants scribbled on ledgers, and guards patrolled the piers with practiced vigilance.

Trafalgar's eyes widened. His steps slowed until he stood still, staring. "The sea?" he murmured.

Garrika's tail swished behind her, amused at his reaction. "That's right. First time seeing it?"

"Yes." His voice was quiet, almost reverent.

'Not really,' he admitted inwardly, 'but in this world... yes. Such a vast ocean. And so many ships, each one a vein carrying wealth into the city. Truly a place of trade.'

They began walking down the wide stone street leading away from the docks. Around them, the city bustled with activity: inns advertising freshly caught fish, smiths forging anchors and chains, traders shouting prices for silks and spices. Wealth practically oozed from every corner, and yet beneath it, Trafalgar felt the undercurrent of vigilance—this city survived on trade, but also on control.

"We should find somewhere to stay before anything else," Garrika suggested, her ears twitching as she surveyed the streets.

"Yes," Trafalgar agreed. "Better to settle in before we do anything further."

As they passed a row of richly decorated inns, Trafalgar asked, "Who controls this city? It doesn't feel like it belongs to any family."

"It doesn't," Garrika replied simply. "Mariven is independent. The entire port belongs to one of the wealthiest merchants on the continent."

"I see," Trafalgar muttered, his gaze lingering on the ships. Independence bought with coin.

Soon, the silhouette of an expensive-looking hotel came into view.

The hotel stood proudly at the corner of the merchant square, its exterior carved with elegant stonework and gilded accents. Bright banners fluttered overhead, and servants in crisp uniforms moved briskly through the entrance, welcoming wealthy travelers. The scent of polished wood and spiced wine wafted from within.

Trafalgar stepped through the doorway first, scanning the interior. The lobby gleamed with chandeliers of mana-crystal, the kind of opulence only merchants who bathed in gold could afford. His expression remained neutral as he approached the reception desk.

"Good afternoon," he said. "Two rooms for three nights."

Before the receptionist could reply, Garrika cut in smoothly. "One room will be fine. Forgive him."

Trafalgar turned his head, frowning slightly, but Garrika leaned closer and whispered in his ear. Her voice was firm, practical. "Do you know how expensive this is? I don't care about sharing."

The receptionist, unbothered, lifted his quill. "Very well. Would you prefer two separate beds, or one double?"

Trafalgar opened his mouth to answer, but Garrika's voice slid in ahead of him again, sharp and decisive: "One double."

The words hung in the air for a beat too long. The receptionist merely nodded, writing it down. "Meals are included in the stay. The price will be three silver for three nights."

This time, Garrika reached into her pouch first, sliding the coins across the desk. "He already paid for our travel," she explained without looking at Trafalgar.

The receptionist smiled, handed her the key, and gestured toward the staircase.

Trafalgar took the key silently, following Garrika up the stairs. His thoughts churned, unreadable in his gray eyes.

'She insisted twice... a single room, a double bed. Am I imagining it? No. She's not subtle. I'd be a fool not to see what she's trying to do.'