

Tyrant 112

Chapter 112: The Merchant's Offer

The bandages around the lycan's torso were crude but serviceable, tightened enough to slow the bleeding. Carefully, he shifted against the wall, wincing as his weight settled. His amber eyes flicked toward Trafalgar and Garrika, gratitude faint beneath the exhaustion etched on his face.

"...There should be a potion," he rasped, voice hoarse. He lifted a weak arm and gestured vaguely toward the front. "Under the counter. Could you... bring it?"

Without hesitation, Garrika rose. Her wolf ears twitched as she sniffed the air, following the faint metallic tang of blood and herbs. She rummaged behind the broken counter, tossing aside splintered wood and shattered glass until her hand brushed something cool and intact. She lifted it—a small vial filled with bright red liquid that shimmered faintly in the dim light.

"Found it," she called, striding back.

Trafalgar's gaze narrowed on the vial, recognizing it instantly. 'A simple healing potion. Just like in any game. At least he was smart enough to keep one hidden.'

Garrika crouched beside the lycan, pressing the glass into his palm. His fingers shook but managed to uncork it. Tilting his head back, he drank greedily. The liquid glowed faintly as it slid down his throat.

Within moments, the gashes across his chest began to close, knitting together as if pulled by invisible threads. The bruises faded to a lighter shade, and the tremor in his hands steadied. This wasn't a common potion—it worked faster, stronger.

He let out a slow breath, relief softening his features. "Much better... Thank you." His voice was still rough, but steadier now. He shifted to sit up straighter, placing the empty vial aside.

A faint smile tugged at his lips as he bowed his head slightly. "I'm Augusto. Merchant of Mariven Port. And... welcome to my shop, though it doesn't look the best right now." His eyes flicked toward the wreckage with rueful humor.

The shop was still a ruin, glass crunching faintly under Garrika's boots as she reached into her back pocket. She pulled out a folded sheet—the list Trafalgar had prepared days ago—and held it out. "This is what we came for."

Augusto took it with a nod, his amber eyes scanning the items quickly. His lips moved as he read under his breath, and for a moment his expression tightened. Then, forcing a smile, he leaned back against the wall.

"Oh, oh, yes..." His tone carried a false brightness. "I don't have any of these."

Trafalgar's gray eyes narrowed. He stared at the lycan silently, unimpressed. 'That oh-oh was for nothing...'

Augusto cleared his throat, lifting a clawed finger. "But! I do know where they can be found. Very simple, really. The three of us will be enough. I can guide you."

Trafalgar's expression hardened, his voice flat. "Details. Where exactly? What kind of place? And how dangerous?"

The lycan chuckled, waving a hand as if brushing away smoke. "Ah, Trafalgar, you worry too much. I'm a merchant—I value coin, not danger. Look at that pouch on your belt... I can see it's heavy. Surely you want to lighten it a little, hm? Trust me, it's safe. I would never risk the life of a client."

Garrika shot him a skeptical glance, then turned to Trafalgar. Her ears twitched, tail flicking in quiet distrust. The wreckage of the shop around them told another story.

Augusto caught the look and let out a soft laugh, raising both hands in mock surrender. "Alright, alright. Those weren't customers earlier... I didn't pay someone what I owed, and they decided to make a mess of my place. That's all. Nothing more."

He straightened as much as his bandaged body allowed, his grin toothy. "Now, if you're serious about this list, come back tomorrow morning. Bring your equipment—it may be needed. I'll have the other items ready."

Trafalgar crossed his arms, his stare sharp as steel. "No vague promises. Tell me where, or there's no deal."

Augusto exhaled through his nose, as though the demand were an inconvenience. For a moment he studied the list again, then shrugged. "Fine. There's a mine not far from here. That's where the rarest material on your list spawns. The others I can provide myself, but this one... we'll have to fetch."

The word hit Trafalgar like a stone. His jaw tightened, silence hanging in the air.

'A mine... nooooooooo!!!! Damn it. The last time I went into one, I barely crawled out alive. That was where I met the Veiled Woman for the last time...' His thoughts spiraled briefly, memories of choking darkness and near-death pressing in. 'Could she appear again? No. That would be dreaming too much.'

He drew in a slow breath through his nose, pushing the memory away. Garrika's voice cut through the silence, steady and practical.

"It's your decision, Trafalgar. We can always wait. When the shop's renovations are done, Arden could handle this for you. But it'll take more time."

Her green eyes fixed on him, unflinching. She wasn't pressuring him—she was laying the choice bare.

Augusto smirked faintly, claws tapping against the counter. "Well? What's it going to be? Mines aren't so bad if you have the right company."

Trafalgar's lips pressed into a thin line. He hated being cornered, but wasting weeks waiting wasn't an option either. Finally, he nodded once. "Fine. Tomorrow morning."

Augusto's grin widened, sharp and toothy. "Good. Then tomorrow it is. I'll prepare everything tonight and meet you at the Gate."

Trafalgar didn't reply, only turned toward the door. Garrika followed, her tail swaying lightly as the two of them stepped back into the cool night air.

The sky above Mariven was already fading to twilight, lanterns flickering to life one by one.

By the time they returned to the hotel, the city had changed its face. The bustling daytime market had quieted; shutters clattered closed along the shopfronts, and lanterns glowed softly in the gathering dusk. The sea breeze drifted through the streets, cool and briny, carrying the faint echo of waves against the harbor walls. Ships at dock were lit with swinging lamps, their light shimmering across the water like scattered jewels.

Garrika stretched her arms above her head, tail flicking lazily. "Dinner?"

Trafalgar glanced toward the hotel doors. "We can."

Inside, the lobby buzzed softly with guests winding down from the day. Garrika strode to the restaurant counter without hesitation, her confidence as natural as her wolfish gait. "Table for two, please."

They were led to a corner table overlooking the faint glow of the harbor through wide glass windows. The menus were unnecessary—both ordered meat dishes. Garrika, however, didn't stop at one plate. She rattled off a list of cuts and roasts until the server blinked in surprise, then scribbled furiously to keep up.

When the food arrived, the table was packed with steaming dishes: roasted beef, spiced pork, grilled lamb. Garrika's eyes lit up like a predator before a feast. Without waiting, she dug in, tearing through the plates with vigor.

Trafalgar lifted his fork slowly, watching her with a mixture of amusement and disbelief. Back on Earth, no one would eat like this in public—gnawing bones, licking juices from her fingers, devouring with open hunger. Yet here, it felt... oddly fitting. Almost funny.

A small smile tugged at his lips before he realized it.

Garrika noticed, pausing mid-bite, ears twitching. "What?" she asked around a mouthful.

Trafalgar shook his head lightly, still smirking. "Nothing. Just... it's good seeing you enjoy the food."

Her chewing slowed. For a moment, she stared at him, then—almost shyly—reached for her drink instead of more meat. "Something to drink, then."

Trafalgar leaned back, recalling the pounding headache of his last hangover. "Only one," he warned.