

Tyrant 126

Chapter 126: The Deal

The bell above the door chimed softly as Trafalgar and Garrika stepped into Augusto's shop. The air was thick with a metallic tang, sharp and almost sweet. Dust shimmered faintly in the light of mana lamps, a purple haze clinging to the corners like smoke.

The source was impossible to miss. Stacks of raw Mythril gleamed along the walls, veins of deep violet running through each chunk, streaked with lighter lavender as if mana itself had been frozen inside. The ore pulsed faintly, catching the eye with every shift of light.

Trafalgar's gaze lingered only for a moment. 'Good. Still here, exactly where I expected him to leave it.'

He had forced the mercenaries—those who had once tried to slit his throat—to dig the mineral out with their own hands. He had stored it here temporarily, in Augusto's shop, while he dealt with Andrew von Mariven.

From behind the counter, Augusto appeared, brushing violet powder from his sleeves. His eyes widened slightly at Trafalgar's arrival, a mix of relief and caution. "You're back... I was beginning to wonder how things went."

Trafalgar walked forward with steady steps, the new coat settling over his shoulders as though it belonged. "Your problem with Andrew von Mariven is resolved. He won't interfere again."

Augusto blinked, brow furrowing. "You really confronted him?"

Trafalgar nodded once. "In a week, he'll send compensation. Ninety percent of it—you'll deliver to Velkaris. To me."

Augusto's hands tightened around the counter, knuckles pale under the faint layer of violet dust. His eyes flicked from the shimmering ore to Trafalgar's calm expression, his jaw working as if the words pained him before they even left his mouth.

"Ninety percent?" he repeated, voice sharp. "That compensation... it should come to me. I was the one suffering under Andrew's ridiculous taxes, not you."

Trafalgar tilted his head, unbothered. "And yet you're alive to complain about it." His gaze shifted briefly to the Mythrill stacked behind Augusto. "Your shop is still standing, your business intact, your throat uncut. That wasn't thanks to luck. That was thanks to me."

The words landed heavy. Garrika leaned against a crate, arms crossed, her tail flicking with amusement.

Augusto's face twisted. "I thought we were friends, Trafalgar. I thought you helped me because—"

"Friends?" Trafalgar cut him off, his voice colder than steel. "I came here to do business. Don't confuse the two."

Augusto's breath caught. For a moment he seemed smaller, shoulders hunched under the weight of the truth he didn't want to hear. His eyes lowered to the counter, then darted back up, frustration and reluctance wrestling behind them.

Trafalgar didn't move, didn't soften. His calm stare pressed harder than any threat.

The silence stretched until Augusto finally exhaled, slow and bitter. He nodded once. "Fine. Ninety percent. Delivered where you say."

Trafalgar leaned back slightly, the faintest curve touching his lips. "Good. Then we understand each other."

Trafalgar broke the silence first, "This will be my way of showing gratitude. Back at the Council, when I was down, you helped me. Consider this repayment." He gestured toward the stacks of Mythrill lining the walls, the veins glowing faintly in the lamplight. "You can sell the ore. We'll split the profits sixty-forty. Sixty for me, forty for you. The money goes to the same place in Velkaris."

For a heartbeat Augusto blinked, then he let out a booming laugh, the sound echoing off the walls. "So in the end, we are friends, eh?"

Trafalgar's lips curved slightly, but only for a moment. He leaned forward on the counter, eyes steady. "Don't forget... at the start you said the materials I wanted would be free."

The laughter died in Augusto's throat. His face shifted quickly, the smile collapsing into a pout-like scowl. He turned his head, grumbling under his breath as he shoved a bundle of refined stones onto the counter with more force than necessary.

Trafalgar watched him, the corners of his mouth tugging again, though he didn't let it show. 'He changes moods like a tsundere... laughing one moment, sulking the next.'

Still, Augusto continued piling the promised materials on the counter, his movements brusque, but he didn't refuse.

Trafalgar straightened, his voice even. "Good. Then let's put it in writing."

Augusto shuffled behind the counter, pulling out parchment, ink, and a thick wax seal. His hands were steadier now, confidence returning with every line he wrote. The agreement was simple but binding: reduction of taxes, compensation delivered to Velkaris, and the sixty-forty split on Mythrill sales.

Trafalgar leaned casually against the counter, waiting as if he already owned the shop. Garrika sat on a crate nearby, her tail flicking lazily as she watched the two men.

"Done," Augusto muttered, pressing the seal down with a firm hand. He slid the parchment toward Trafalgar, who scanned it quickly before nodding. "Good enough."

They clasped hands across the counter, Augusto's grip surprisingly firm despite the lingering dust on his palms. "Thank you, Trafalgar," he said earnestly. "If you ever need something—anything—you come here. You'll always find my door open."

Trafalgar gave the faintest of nods, his expression unreadable. 'At least he knows where the line is now.'

Augusto disappeared into the back room and returned carrying a sturdy leather backpack. The seams were reinforced, the straps wide and practical. He dropped it on the counter with a soft thud. "Here. To carry what you came for."

Inside were the promised materials: refined powders, polished stones, ingots neatly wrapped in cloth. Everything Trafalgar had asked for.

Trafalgar slung the pack over one shoulder, testing its weight. It fit perfectly.

"Good," he said simply.

Augusto chuckled, scratching his beard. "Don't be such a stranger. Next time you're in Mariven Port, stop by. Even if it's not for business, maybe we can drink something."

Trafalgar's lips twitched, halfway between a smirk and silence. Garrika's eyes glinted as she watched him.

The deal was done.

The mission in Mariven Port had ended. The first step toward finding the Veiled Woman was now closer.