

Tyrant 134

Chapter 134: A Flower

- Zafira POV -

Zafira stood in front of her mirror, tilting her head as she adjusted the straps of her dress. The fabric clung in all the right places. She smoothed a hand over her chest, then paused, lips curving faintly in mischief.

'The last time we trained together... I'm pretty sure he looked,' she thought, cheeks warming despite herself. Her gray eyes flickered down, and a quiet laugh escaped her throat. 'And now... they've grown again. Let's see if he notices this time.'

Her reflection stared back: light purple hair falling like a silky curtain around her shoulders, polished black horns curving elegantly from her head, eyes gleaming with quiet anticipation. A demon's features, but softened by the faint blush in her cheeks.

She reached to the bed, where her most precious possession rested. The silver chain gleamed softly as she lifted it, the tiny pressed white flower sealed within the pendant catching the light. A memory, a promise—their promise. She clasped it around her neck, fingers lingering against the cool metal.

"Childhood friend," she murmured, lips tightening into a wistful smile. That was what she always called herself. Trafalgar had changed since then; he remembered her name, remembered that they had known each other, but the rest was fog. To her, every detail was vivid—his small hand pulling hers in the labyrinth, the way he had said don't cry, I'm here.

Zafira inhaled deeply, forcing herself to focus. 'He'll think this is just a shopping trip. But for me...' She glanced at her reflection one last time, a glint of determination in her gray eyes.

"...for me, this is a date."

The pendant felt heavier than usual against her chest as Zafira sat down on the edge of her bed. She let her fingers brush over the sealed flower inside. The memory came rushing back, vivid as if it had happened yesterday.

She was six years old again, running through the tall hedges of the Council's grand garden. At first, it was fun—a game with the other heirs. Trafalgar was there too; he had not yet become the quiet and silent child he was, laughter echoing between the walls of green. But then, somewhere along the turns, she realized she was alone. The laughter faded, the paths all looked the same, and her small hands trembled.

Tears welled in her gray eyes as she called out weakly, "Hello? Is anyone there?" No answer. The hedges seemed endless, swallowing her voice.

That was when she heard hurried footsteps. A boy's voice broke through the silence.

"Zafira! Where are you?"

Her heart leapt. She pressed herself against the hedge and whispered, "Here!"

The leaves parted as a younger Trafalgar stumbled into view, his hair messy, his face determined. He looked nervous too, but the moment he saw her crying, he straightened.

"Don't worry," he said, reaching out his small hand. "I'm here. Let's go together."

She grabbed his hand instantly, clinging to it like a lifeline. They walked side by side until the sunlight broke through the exit. Before they left the labyrinth, Trafalgar bent down, plucked a tiny white flower growing from the hedge, and handed it to her.

"Don't cry anymore. Keep this instead."

Zafira held that flower to her chest then—and still did now.

She smiled faintly, whispering, "You forgot, but I never will, maybe it is something childish but for me it was everything."

Zafira stood again before the mirror, adjusting the folds of her dress until they sat just right across her hips. She leaned closer, practicing a smile that wasn't too obvious, then frowned and tried another.

'Don't look desperate,' she scolded herself. 'But... don't look cold either. He'll notice if I act strange.'

Her gaze drifted to her own reflection—light purple hair brushed perfectly, curved black horns polished to a faint shine, gray eyes that held more nerves than she wanted to admit. She touched the pendant at her neck, grounding herself.

Her mind betrayed her, pulling her back to thoughts of Trafalgar.

'He's different now. Completely different.'

She remembered the boy in the labyrinth—quiet, hesitant, easily shaken. A boy who often looked down instead of forward, who spoke in small whispers. A boy who had clung to her hand nervously even while saving her.

But now... this Trafalgar wasn't the same. His every word carried weight. His eyes burned with determination. Again and again he repeated that he needed to become stronger, stronger, stronger.

'What happened to you?' she wondered. 'What made you change so much?'

For her, the shift was almost unsettling, but also magnetic. The nervous child she had known had become a man she could barely predict.

Zafira pressed her palms against the edge of the desk, leaning closer to the mirror. 'If he remembers me, if he remembers us, would it matter? Would he look at me the same way?'

She let out a breath, steadying herself. "Come on, Zafira," she whispered aloud. "It's just shopping. Just shopping."

Zafira lay sprawled across her bed, the pendant pressed gently against her chest. Her gray eyes traced the ceiling as thoughts circled endlessly.

'He doesn't remember,' she told herself for what felt like the hundredth time. 'But I do. And I always will.'

Her thumb brushed over the glass of the necklace, where the tiny white flower rested, preserved but fragile. It was her proof, her treasure, her reminder that once upon a time, even as a timid child, Trafalgar had chosen her.

'Maybe he'll never remember,' she admitted silently. 'Maybe he'll never look at me the same way I look at him.'

But she smiled faintly anyway. 'Then I'll just make new memories with him. Until he can't forget me again.'

The sound came suddenly—tock, tock, tock.

Her heart skipped. She sat up quickly, smoothing down her dress, her hair tumbling forward in purple waves.

From the other side of the door, his voice carried through, steady and calm. "Are you ready to go?"

Taking one last steadying breath, she stood and walked toward the door. Her fingers lingered on the handle as she whispered under her breath:

"Of course I'm ready."

With that, she opened it, her practiced smile slipping into place, hiding the storm of feelings inside.