

Tyrant 144

Chapter 144: Snow over Euclid

The first thing Trafalgar noticed was the cold. Even from inside the Gate building, the chill seeped through the stone walls. Beyond the tall glass windows, snow drifted down steadily, painting Euclid in white. The city at the foot of the Morgain mountains always carried winter in its bones.

The hall was quiet but tense. Two Morgain soldiers guarded the entrance, spears crossed in ceremonial vigilance. Near them stood the clerk Trafalgar remembered from his last visit—the man who handled the Gate’s ledgers and reports.

The clerk’s eyes widened the instant he recognized him. "Oh! Lord Trafalgar, what a surprise to see you alive and well. I assume you’ve come because of what happened at the estate..."

One of the guards turned sharply, his tone biting. "That’s not something you should speak of so freely. Watch yourself."

The clerk bristled, jaw tightening. "I know. But believe me when I say this—I am one of the most affected. Lord Mordrek was a good man... and a better governor."

The words hung heavy in the air.

Trafalgar’s expression stayed composed, though something flickered in his chest. "It’s fine. Thank you—for remembering my uncle that way."

The guards shifted uneasily, falling silent. They had been part of the last expedition, the one where Trafalgar had returned alive after crossing paths with a dragon. No one knew the details, only rumors. And now, with Mordrek dead to such a beast, the fact Trafalgar had survived once carried a sharper edge.

‘They know I don’t have Mordrek’s strength. But even they can’t ignore it—I came back from facing a dragon.’

The heavy doors of the Gate building opened, and a sharp gust of cold air swept in. Trafalgar and Caelum stepped outside, boots crunching against snow-dusted stone. The streets of Euclid stretched before them, and the scars of battle were impossible to miss.

Trafalgar slowed, his eyes scanning the horizon. Whole sections of the city were broken—walls collapsed, rooftops caved in, smoke still rising faintly from the wreckage. Nearly a quarter of Euclid bore the mark of ruin.

'Caelum said the city wasn't destroyed completely. That only a small part was affected. But looking at this... twenty, maybe twenty-five percent gone. Pure devastation...'

His gaze caught on one ruin in particular. The building was reduced to nothing but blackened timber and shattered stone, debris half-buried under snow. Recognition struck hard.

'The library... the place where I studied the Primordial Bloodline. Gone. Just rubble now, is that old man that helped me alright?'

The loss sat heavy on his chest. That library had been more than a building—it had been a piece of knowledge, a fragment of hope. And now it was dust.

He turned to Caelum, voice quieter than before. "How many victims in total?"

Caelum didn't hesitate. "As I told you, almost none from the dragon itself. Lord Mordrek pulled it into the forest before it could rampage further. But the collapses... they claimed more lives. Families trapped, homes crushed."

Trafalgar said nothing. His breath misted in the cold air as silence stretched between them.

'Mordrek gave his life to keep them safe. Even in death, he was still protecting. And yet... this destruction remains. The weight of it will fall on someone. Maybe on me, and that's something that I don't want right now, I have already more problems that I would desire.'

Caelum adjusted his gloves and gestured ahead. "We should move. Our next destination is waiting."

The streets of Euclid stretched in silence, broken only by the crunch of their footsteps over snow. Soldiers patrolled in pairs, their armor dull against the gray sky. Merchants and townsfolk moved quietly, rebuilding what they could, their voices hushed as though speaking too loudly might awaken the memory of the dragon.

Trafalgar's eyes lingered on the ruins, then turned to Caelum. "Where are we going now?"

Caelum walked with his hands clasped neatly behind his back, posture unshaken despite the cold. "There is someone waiting at Lord Mordrek's mansion. They will see to our transport to the castle."

Trafalgar gave a curt nod, but his mind spun.

'So it begins. Mordrek gone, the city scarred, and the family already moving. Nothing here will stay simple for long.'

He exhaled a cloud of white breath, then asked, "And the rumors? What are people saying?"

Caelum's golden eyes shifted slightly. "Speculation only. Some claim the dragon attacked Euclid at random, others whisper it was sent deliberately. But the truth is unknown. Not even the family has uncovered the reason."

Trafalgar frowned, his gaze drifting back to the broken skyline. 'So even the Morgains don't know. That makes it worse. If they're blind, it means this wasn't just some stray beast wandering into a city. Someone—or something—chose this place for a reason.'

They walked on, the mansion rising ahead, standing proud despite the ruin around it. Yet even from here, Trafalgar felt the absence of the man who had once lived there.

Caelum's voice cut through his thoughts, calm and measured. "It will not be long now, young master. Prepare yourself."

The mansion gates opened, revealing the snow-covered courtyard. Trafalgar slowed, his eyes narrowing as a shadow fell across the garden.

Hovering above the estate was no carriage, no ordinary vessel.

The ship descended with a low, resonant hum that made the air tremble. Its frame was long and sharp, forged from dark steel etched with glowing runes that pulsed in steady rhythm. Six wings spread from its sides—two vast ones dominating the center, flanked by smaller pairs at the front and rear that shifted gently to stabilize its descent.

Mana vents hissed beneath the hull, releasing streams of pale vapor that coiled like mist through the cold air. Along the sides, crystal nodes flared in sequence, casting pale blue light that rippled across the snow. The vessel moved with a precision that felt almost alive, settling toward the garden as though the earth itself bent to receive it.

Trafalgar stared in silence. Then his lips twisted. "Not again..."

The ramp unfolded with a heavy clang, and a man stepped down with practiced ease. Alfred—his white hair tied behind his neck, long coat brushing the snow, deep purple eyes sharp beneath the brim of a captain's hat with a faded crest. Despite his age, he carried himself with the same crisp confidence as always.

Those eyes fell on Trafalgar, and a crooked grin appeared. "Well, well... look who's finally out of his cage. How've you been, locked-away lordling? Didn't freeze up here, did you?"

Trafalgar's jaw tightened, though he kept his tone level. "I've managed."

The old captain chuckled, his voice rough but not unkind. "Good. You'll need more than just managing where we're going."