

Tyrant 151

Chapter 151: The Cursed Heir's Burden

Trafalgar leaned against the wall, the faint glow of the infirmary lanterns casting long shadows across the room. He had nothing left to say to Mayla. His thoughts twisted inward, dragging him back into the storm he carried.

'Nothing from here on will be easy. I can feel it. Like when I first woke up in this cursed body... those first weeks were hell. Rivena's attempt, the assassins, the Veiled Woman, the mine. Every step has been a fight to breathe.'

He rubbed his temple, trying to steady the pounding in his head.

'The so-called title of Cursed Heir fits too damn well. Misfortune clings to me like a shadow, and it's not letting go. Even that witch's words echo still—"Your fate is already written." At the time I brushed it off. But now? Living through all this? Tch. Maybe she wasn't lying.'

The silence between him and Mayla grew heavy, but strangely not suffocating. She sat with that gentle smile, one that seemed to reach him despite everything. A warmth he wasn't used to.

For a moment, Trafalgar let out a bitter laugh under his breath. 'So what if fate's already decided? If it really is written, then I'll just rip the damn pages apart and write it again. Survive—that's all I've ever aimed for. And I'll keep doing it.'

He glanced at Mayla briefly, then away again, shoulders tightening. The storm inside him hadn't calmed, but at least he knew his path forward.

Survival.

The silence finally broke when Mayla tilted her head, her soft smile never leaving her face. "Well then, young ma—sorry, Trafalgar. I'm still not used to it. What now?"

Trafalgar's lips pressed into a thin line. "Now? Now I get to sit down with my lovely family and play their games. Not exactly something I'm looking forward to." He exhaled sharply, then turned his gaze back to her. "But once it's done, I'll come back for you. We'll leave this place together."

Her eyes widened slightly. "Leave? To where?"

"Velkaris." He folded his arms. "I bought a local there. Don't look at me like that—it's not about business. Having a foothold in the city means I can get whatever I need faster. And for you... it's a place you can stay. Either running it, if you want, or just living in your own place. I told you before—I'm not forcing you into anything."

Mayla blinked, her lips parting. "A place in Velkaris..." Her voice carried both wonder and hesitation, as if the idea of a life beyond these walls was too fragile to grasp fully.

Trafalgar gave a small shrug. "Yeah. It's real. After the funeral, we'll go. You won't have to rot away here anymore."

Mayla lowered her gaze, fingers brushing against the blanket beside her. "You've thought about this already."

"Of course I have." His tone sharpened, though not at her. "I'm not leaving you behind again."

Trafalgar rolled up his sleeve absentmindedly, adjusting the cuff as he spoke. The movement caught Mayla's attention immediately. Her eyes widened, and she leaned forward, voice sharp. "What is that?"

He blinked, glancing at the dark lines curling across his forearm—an incomplete serpent etched into his skin. For a split second, he considered hiding it again, but shrugged instead. "Ah. That. Long story. Let's just call it a tattoo." He raised a brow at her. "Looks good, doesn't it?"

Mayla's expression stiffened. "But... it's not finished. It looks wrong."

Trafalgar chuckled under his breath, though the sound lacked humor. "Yeah, well. Didn't exactly have time to complete it. Someday, maybe."

Her gaze lingered on the mark, worry flickering across her features. Then, slowly, she shook her head. "You've changed, Trafalgar. A lot. But in a way... I'm glad. You look stronger. Happier. Before, when you locked yourself away, when you were crushed because you couldn't awaken your core—you looked like you'd already given up."

He smirked faintly, though his eyes carried no amusement. "Guess I had to do what it took to move forward." He stretched his arms, exhaling. "Now it's time to go play nice with my lovely family."

Mayla pressed her lips together, trying not to laugh.

"Don't hold it back," Trafalgar muttered, noticing. "If you want to laugh, then laugh. Besides..." His eyes softened slightly. "I like your smile."

Her breath caught, and she blinked at him, surprised. "Are you feeling all right? No headache?"

He raised an eyebrow. "What? I can't give you a compliment now?"

Mayla's cheeks warmed, but she hid it with a small smile. "No... I'm honored. Just didn't expect it. Maybe the academy taught you how to treat a lady."

Trafalgar tilted his head. 'Or maybe you just never had the chance to see it before.'

Tock. Tock.

A voice, deep and steady, carried through the door. "Young master Trafalgar, your family awaits. The dinner will begin shortly. Lord Valtair does not wish to be kept waiting."

Trafalgar let out a sharp breath, muttering under it. "Of course he doesn't." He turned to Mayla, his tone softening. "Pack what you'll need while I'm gone. When this is over, we leave together. Don't forget that."

Mayla's smile was small but certain. "Understood. I'll be here."

He gave her one last look, then pushed himself up and headed for the door. The weight of the castle pressed heavier with each step.

Outside the infirmary stood a man in a crisp butler's uniform—dark hair, brown eyes, appearing no older than thirty. To anyone else, he was just another servant. But Trafalgar's gut twisted with certainty.

It was Caelum.

He leaned close, speaking low enough for only the disguised man to hear. "While I'm gone, she stays safe. If you fail that, your loyalty means nothing to me."

Caelum's expression didn't flicker. He simply inclined his head, a silent vow. Then, in a louder, professional tone meant for the elven healer nearby, he said, "Very well, young master Trafalgar. It seems you are ready. It is time we go."

The elf healer glanced between them, confused, but said nothing.

Trafalgar adjusted his cuffs and straightened, his eyes narrowing as he looked down the corridor. The heavy doors at the end led toward the dining hall, toward the vipers waiting with their fangs hidden behind silver words.