

Tyrant 155

Chapter 155: Dusty Room

Trafalgar walked the dim corridors of the Morgain castle, each step echoing faintly against the stone walls. The servants had already withdrawn for the night, leaving the halls eerily quiet. His hand pushed open the heavy wooden door to his old chamber, and a stale draft greeted him.

The room wasn't untouched by time, but it was close. Only a few months had passed since he'd last slept here, yet dust clung stubbornly to the corners, and a thin layer dulled the furniture. No one had bothered to clean it. No one cared.

He stepped inside slowly, his eyes roaming the familiar space. 'Two months, he thought. That's all it's been. But it feels like another lifetime.'

He remembered those first three months after transmigrating—when this very room had been his prison. The silence, the suffocating stench of neglect, the hollow reminder of what the "old Trafalgar" had become. Fifteen years of misery compressed into these walls. That Trafalgar had drowned in despair, locked away until death finally came by his own hand.

The current Trafalgar—the one who had lived twenty-one years in another world—exhaled slowly, lowering himself onto the bed. The mattress let out a soft groan under the weight of dust and disuse.

His gaze fixed on the cracked ceiling. "Some things never change," he muttered, sarcasm lacing his tone. Yet beneath it, there was a heaviness, a mix of contempt for what this room symbolized and a strange, bitter nostalgia.

He stretched out on the bed, one arm behind his head. For a fleeting moment, he imagined the old Trafalgar here, wasting away. A caged rat. Forgotten by everyone except Mayla.

The silence didn't last.

A ripple of mana stirred the air, faint but unmistakable. Trafalgar didn't bother to move; he'd felt that presence enough times to know who it was.

"You've gotten good at appearing where you're not wanted," he said dryly, eyes still fixed on the ceiling.

From the corner of the room, a figure stepped out of the shadows—Caelum, his silver-gray hair catching the candlelight. His expression was calm, his posture immaculate, as if materializing unannounced were the most natural thing in the world.

"You were bold tonight, young master," Caelum said, his tone even but edged with meaning. "Reckless, some would argue. To speak that way in front of the wives and heirs... it could have ended badly."

Trafalgar sat up slowly, brushing dust from his sleeve. His dark-blue eyes locked on Caelum's. "I know," he admitted, voice low but firm. "But it was something I had to do. I didn't crawl back here to bow my head and wag my tail like some family pet. If they want obedience, they won't find it in me."

Caelum studied him in silence for a moment, his golden gaze searching. Then he gave the faintest nod. "So you've decided to step out of the cage."

Trafalgar smirked faintly. "Didn't know I was still in one."

"Every Morgain is in a cage," Caelum replied, his tone clipped, almost reflective.

Caelum's eyes shifted toward the window, where snow pressed faintly against the glass. His tone remained steady, but heavier than before.

"Valttair will overlook what you said at dinner," he began. "He knows your worth too well to punish you openly. But the funeral... that is different. Every Morgain will be present—the elders, uncles, aunts, cousins, Sylis. It is an old tradition. And all eyes will be on you."

Trafalgar straightened a little on the bed, his expression losing its usual sharpness. "I understand," he said quietly. "I won't cause trouble there. Mordrek deserves better than that."

Caelum studied him, as if measuring the sincerity in his words.

Trafalgar's voice lowered, almost reflective. "I lived with him for three weeks in Euclid. With him, with Anthera, with Sylis and the twins. It wasn't long, but... it felt like family. Something I don't get from this castle." He paused, his gaze drifting toward the ceiling. "I owe them at least my respect. They lost far more than I did."

For once, there was no sarcasm in his voice, no bite hidden between the words. Just a simple truth.

Caelum gave a slow nod. "Then hold to that. Respect the tradition, respect his memory. That will speak louder than defiance ever could."

Trafalgar exhaled through his nose, shoulders easing slightly. "You don't have to worry. I'll be serious. For Mordrek... and for the family he left behind."

The air between them settled, heavy but steady, as if both knew the weight of what was coming. Finally, Caelum inclined his head once more and turned toward the door. His steps were quiet, precise, until the latch clicked softly behind him.

Alone again, Trafalgar sat in silence, staring at the floating dust motes caught in the moonlight. The ache in his chest tightened, not with rage but with the memory of Euclid—three fleeting weeks that had felt more like family than anything the Morgain castle had ever given him.

With a tired sigh, he rose, stripped down, and sat cross-legged on the cold floorboards. His breathing slowed, the faint hum of mana beginning to gather around him. The familiar rhythm of meditation took hold. He could feel it: the edge of a breakthrough, the thin veil separating his current core from the next stage.

'I'm close,' he thought, eyes shut, focus sharpening. 'Just a little more...'

The hours slipped by unnoticed. Trafalgar remained unmoving on the floor, his breath steady, mana coursing through his veins like a relentless tide. Every cycle pushed against the limits of his core, every pull and release of energy bringing him closer to that thin barrier he had been straining toward for weeks.

By the time the first light crept over the mountains, the chamber was awash in pale gold. The glow spilled across the stone floor and brushed against his closed eyes, dragging him from the depths of concentration. His skin was drenched with sweat, his chest heaving as if he had been running for miles.

With effort, Trafalgar pushed himself up. His body ached, but his resolve held firm. It was time to shower, change, and prepare. The funeral awaited—and with it, the weight of the Morgain legacy.