

Tyrant 160

Chapter 160: The Bastard and the Aunt

The wyvern's claws slammed against the frozen stone, scattering snow in a violent spray. Trafalgar swung his leg over the saddle and slid down, boots crunching against the icy ground. The warmth of the beast's body vanished the instant his feet touched the plateau, replaced by a cold so sharp it cut to the bone.

'God damn, my balls are going to freeze up here. The wyvern kept me warm, but out here it's cold as hell.'

He exhaled, his breath fogging thick in the air, and pulled his cloak tighter around his shoulders. The others dismounted with practiced ease, their movements elegant despite the biting wind. Knights hurried to steady the wyverns, while handlers secured reins and checked saddles. The creatures folded their wings with heavy snaps, their guttural hisses echoing across the plateau.

Before them towered the wall. A fortress of stone and frost, its massive surface glistened beneath the pale morning light. Watchtowers pierced the sky at regular intervals, guards standing rigid, spears gleaming like teeth along the battlements. The sheer size of it made even the Morgain wyverns seem small, as if they had landed at the gates of another world.

Trafalgar flexed his fingers inside his gloves, the chill numbing them despite the thick fabric. His gaze fixed on the colossal gates ahead.

The sound came first—a deep metallic groan, ancient gears straining under the weight of centuries. Snow crumbled from the seams as the portcullis slowly rose. The rumble reverberated through the stone beneath his boots, a sound both heavy and commanding.

The gateway opened.

From the shadow of the gate, a figure emerged.

Lady Seradra walked with measured steps, her boots pressing firmly into the snow. Her blond hair, streaked faintly with silver, was tied back in a high ponytail, and her crimson eyes swept over the group

with a hawk's sharpness. At fifty years old, she carried herself with the dignity of someone accustomed to command, her presence alone enough to silence the courtyard.

"Valttair," she called, her voice crisp and resonant. "You've arrived."

Valttair inclined his head slightly. "Seradra."

Her gaze lingered on him, sharp but not without a trace of warmth. "Good. It seems you've brought the whole family. Tomorrow will be the funeral. Anthera and her children have been here for several days already. They are still shaken by Mordrek's death."

Trafalgar lowered his eyes briefly, a thought flickering in his mind. 'Sylis probably still can't believe it. And the twins... they won't even understand what was taken from them.'

"Where is she?" Valttair asked. "I wish to speak with Anthera."

"In the reception hall," Seradra replied. "Sylis is with the little ones."

Valttair moved to step forward, but Seradra raised a hand, halting him.

"Valttair," she said quietly, though her tone was edged with steel. "I know how you are. For once, show some heart. Anthera has just lost her husband—do not wound her further."

Valttair's grey eyes hardened. He brushed her hand aside with a sharp movement.

"I have also lost a brother," he answered curtly. "Do not think my grief weighs any less."

Without another word, he strode past her, his boots striking against the stone, leaving tension behind him.

Seradra exhaled slowly before turning her gaze to the rest of the family. Her features softened just enough to suggest composure.

"Come," she said, her voice firm but calmer. "It has been too long since I have seen all of you."

One by one, the Morgain family stepped forward to greet Seradra.

The wives of Valttair bowed their heads politely, their jewels glittering faintly against the dull winter light. Daughters and sons offered stiff nods of respect. Seradra returned each greeting with a measured smile, her crimson eyes studying them as if weighing not only their words, but their worth.

When Maeron approached, her expression shifted. She straightened slightly, as though she were facing a mountain.

"Maeron," she said, her voice carrying a hint of disbelief. "You've grown even more. How tall are you now?"

Maeron's deep voice answered with pride. "Two meters and twenty-two."

Seradra gave a low whistle. "Your uncle Mordrek would have been impressed. Strength and height in equal measure—truly a Morgain." She placed a hand briefly on his forearm, nodding with approval before allowing him to step aside.

Then her eyes moved on.

When Trafalgar stepped forward, she froze. Her gaze sharpened, narrowing as though trying to reconcile what she saw with what she had heard all her life.

Her lips parted, and the word slipped out, sharp as a knife:

"The bastard?"

A faint silence fell over the group.

Trafalgar did not flinch. His grey eyes met hers steadily, a spark of defiance glinting in them. "My name is Trafalgar," he replied calmly. "And you are?"

Seradra blinked, then let out a small laugh, surprising several nearby. "Sharp tongue. I didn't expect that. It's the first time we've met, and yet you don't bow your head."

She straightened her shoulders and said clearly, "I am Seradra, your aunt. The elder sister of your father. This is our first meeting, but... you seem different from the rumors."

Trafalgar shrugged faintly. "Rumors are always exaggerated. They could just as easily be false."

Seradra's smile widened. "Indeed. You are right."

The greetings slowly came to an end, and the family began to disperse under the cold mountain wind. Seradra lingered, her crimson eyes still on Trafalgar as though measuring him anew.

Trafalgar tilted his head slightly, his tone calm but direct. "Do you know where Sylis is? I would like to see her... and the twins."

For a moment, Seradra said nothing. Surprise flickered across her features, subtle but genuine. None of Valttair's children had spoken of the younger branch—not once. Yet this boy, the one branded a bastard, was the first to ask.

"You want to see the children?" she asked, her voice quieter now, edged with curiosity.

Trafalgar nodded once. "Yes."

Her lips curved into something between a smile and a sigh. "That is... unexpected. But perhaps not unwelcome. You are the only heir who has shown even a thought for them."

Around them, a few of the wives exchanged faint looks, whispers slipping between cold breaths, but Seradra ignored them. She stepped closer to Trafalgar, lowering her voice.

"They are inside the wall," she said, motioning toward a smaller side passage leading into the fortress. "The twins are with Syllis in one of the eastern chambers. She has hardly left their side since they arrived."

Her gaze lingered on him once more, and her expression softened. "Be gentle with them. They've lost much already."

Trafalgar inclined his head, his voice steady. "I will."

He turned and began to walk toward the narrow passage, his boots echoing faintly against the stone. The air inside the walls felt different—quieter, colder, as if the fortress itself held its breath.

'Syllis, huh... it's been a month maybe,' he thought, his eyes narrowing. 'I wonder how much she's changed... and how much she's lost.'

The shadows of the corridor stretched before him as he advanced.